

THE CIA IN CENTRAL AFRICA, 1960-1990:
A FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVE

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of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Glen Andrew Grady

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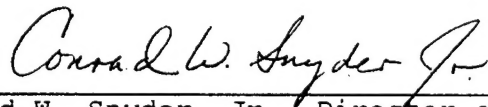
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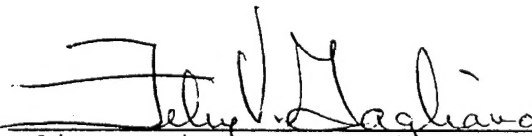
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ABSTRACT

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Master of Arts in International Affairs

THE CIA IN CENTRAL AFRICA, 1960-1990: A FOREIGN POLICY
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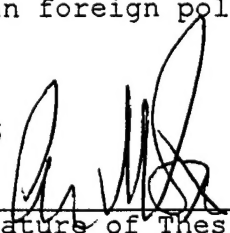
This thesis presents an overview of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the Congo/Zaire and in Angola during the period from 1960 to 1990. The thesis seeks to ascertain the amount and the influence, if any, of the CIA on United States foreign policy by first reviewing U.S. foreign policy and then outlining the activities of the CIA during the period. The central research question of the thesis is: What activities did the CIA conduct in Central Africa from 1960 to 1990; and how do those activities relate to United States foreign policy? The main hypothesis is that the CIA more often than not created its own foreign policy in Central Africa by acting, with the tacit approval of successive administrations, as an independent entity; and that the CIA's foreign policy was not always consistent with American foreign policy.

The thesis is conducted from an interdisciplinary perspective synthesizing primary source material, mostly government documents, and secondary sources from the disciplines of history, political science and African area studies. In the production of this thesis an historical-analytical approach is used.

The thesis validates the main hypothesis: the CIA did, in effect, conduct its own foreign policy in Central Africa from 1960 to 1990. The Agency acted under its own accord to pursue objectives and implement policy in Central Africa during the Cold War. Although it is impossible to state definitively that the CIA always acted on its own, or to specify to what degree it did act by itself, there can be little doubt that as a general rule the Agency acted as an unrestrained and unregulated player in the American foreign policy arena.

Date June 1996

Approved


Signature of Thesis Director

Alan R. Booth

Name of Thesis Director

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM

This thesis presents an overview of the role of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the Congo/Zaire and in Angola during the period from 1960 to 1990. The thesis seeks to ascertain the amount and the influence, if any, of the CIA on United States foreign policy by first reviewing U.S. foreign policy and then outlining the activities of the CIA during the period. The subject has been dealt with only in a limited fashion by scholars since the conclusion of the Cold War, and only now can this era be studied with an historical perspective that allows for an objective study. The CIA's record of activity in Central Africa has received relatively limited attention from the various disciplines of history, political science and African area studies. This thesis is conducted from an interdisciplinary perspective in the hope of contributing to a greater understanding of what has been an underreported topic, in a region of the world that has received only minimal scholarly attention.

The thesis provides information for scholars and other interested observers on what the CIA was doing with regard to foreign policy in the Cold War "proxy battlefield" of Central

Africa. Proxy battlefield is a term used to describe the big-power use of Africa and other parts of the Third World, as surrogate battlefields during the Cold War. These areas were used in the propagation of East-West ideological conflict by the great powers' arming and supporting Third World countries, or certain groups within those countries, as surrogates in promoting the interests of, for example, the Soviet Union or the United States. This subject is therefore addressed in a Cold War context in the realization that Africa was indeed a proxy battlefield for the superpowers.

The central research question of this thesis is: What activities did the CIA conduct in Central Africa from 1960 to 1990; and how do those activities relate to United States foreign policy? The main hypothesis is that the CIA more often than not created its own foreign policy in Central Africa by acting, with the tacit approval of successive American administrations, as an independent entity; and that the CIA's foreign policy was not always consistent with official United States foreign policy.¹ In the production of this thesis an historical-analytical approach is utilized. Secondary source

¹ There is no one single foreign policy that is "official" at any given time. Foreign policy is the culmination of responses to events by different individuals and agencies in the government. Official foreign policy is defined in this study as the public stance on a particular issue as reported to the American public by the White House (i.e. the administration) and the State Department. It is not the intent of this thesis to delve into the policy nuances and differences of each successive administration, but rather to provide the reader with a broad framework as to what the public position of Washington was and how that position related to what the CIA was doing.

literature from several disciplines is synthesized with primary source material, mostly government sources, in order to paint an accurate and complete picture of CIA activities in Central Africa from 1960 to 1990.²

The conclusion chapter provides an analysis of the CIA as a foreign policymaking organization and a further analysis as to how the Agency's foreign agenda related to the official foreign policy originating from Washington during the period. Additionally, the conclusion addresses whether or not the CIA exercised any influence over events in Central Africa; and what might have happened if the CIA had never intervened in Central Africa. Chapter IV finishes with some thoughts on the CIA in light of the research conducted in this study.

Due to the fact that this is an unclassified study, the greatest limitation comes from the inability to obtain documents from the CIA itself.³ That limitation restricts the amount of knowledge which a study of this kind is able to impart. Because of this limitation the complete and true story of the CIA's intervention in Central Africa may never be known.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Secondary literature on this topic falls into three broad categories: books about U.S. foreign policy in Central Africa

² This thesis is derived solely from unclassified sources that are readily available to the public.

³ For additional information on this topic see, Zachary Karabell and Timothy Naftali, "History Declassified: The Perils and

during the Cold War; books about the CIA; and books about each specific African country. An extensive amount of literature on U.S. foreign policy towards Africa during the Cold War has been produced. Much of it describes United States foreign policy in great detail, but generally it deals with U.S. government agencies other than the State Department, such as the CIA, only in a limited fashion. Additionally, there is a large quantity of secondary literature on the CIA, including information about the structure of the Agency and its past operations. Because of security restrictions, it is difficult to obtain information directly from the CIA on its activities in Central Africa. In fact, there are only a small handful of books that deal in any detail with CIA operations on the entire African continent during this period.

Most extensive of all is the literature regarding U.S. foreign policy towards the continent of Africa during the Cold War. Because the literature is so voluminous, it provides a comprehensive and useful framework within which to analyze the CIA intervention in Central Africa during the period. African Crisis Areas and U.S. Foreign Policy (1985) edited by Gerald Bender, James Coleman and Richard Sklar, The Red Orchestra: The Case of Africa (1988) Dennis Bark, editor; and The Superpowers and Africa (1990) by Zaki Laidi are all valuable resources that help to explain the global confrontation between the U.S. and

the Soviet Union during the period. United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa (1994) by Peter Schraeder, and Free at Last? U.S. Policy Toward Africa and the End of the Cold War (1992) by Michael Clough both provide useful insights on the Cold War and its effects in Africa following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. They also provide additional insight on overall U.S. foreign policy during the period.

Following a review of U.S. foreign policy towards Africa in general terms, it is necessary to focus on American policy towards the Central African region during the period. The Congo Crisis and the Angolan Civil War have been widely studied, and a number of important works are considered as important reading necessary to gain a basic understanding of the main events. For example, works such as The Congo Cables (1982) by Madeline Kalb; JFK: Ordeal in Africa (1983) by Richard Mahoney; America's Tyrant (1993) by Sean Kelly; American Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1964 (1974) by Stephen Weissman; and From the Congo to Soweto (1982) by Henry Jackson, all tell the story of the Congo crisis from the American foreign policy perspective. The Angolan Civil War and American foreign policy is covered in such works as Angola and the Politics of Intervention (1983) by Daniel Spikes, The Suffering Grass (1992) edited by Thomas Weiss and James Blight and The Angolan Revolution, Vol. II (1978) by John Marcum.

One aspect of the literature relating to the CIA covers covert operations. Some of the landmark works on clandestine

activities conducted by the CIA include Presidents' Secret Wars (1988) by John Prados; Veil (1987) by Bob Woodward; Covert Action (1987) by Gregory Treverton. These works explain how the CIA functions and what role it plays in the U.S. policy making establishment. The U.S. Intelligence Community (1981) by Jeffery Richelson gives a comprehensive overview of the CIA and explains how the Agency operates as a part of the American intelligence apparatus. A basic understanding of the CIA is an important aspect of this thesis.

Less has been reported specifically about the role of the CIA in Central Africa from 1960 to 1990. All of the above works do mention the role of the CIA in varying degrees of detail. Only a few books specifically address individual CIA activities in Central Africa during this period. They include Killing Hope (1995) by William Blum and In Search of Enemies (1978) by John Stockwell. Those works provide background information that addresses the various aspects of CIA action in Central Africa during the period under study.

This thesis synthesizes selected literature from these diverse topics into a comprehensive study regarding CIA activities in Central Africa from 1960 to 1990. American foreign policy in Central Africa is used to lay the foundation for a review of the actions of the Agency. Original documents are used as much as possible to retrace the milestones of U.S. foreign policy without the limitations that other works of

literature may impose. Primary documents, explained below, are used to fill gaps regarding CIA activities.

The bulk of primary source materials relating to the topic consists of unclassified government documents from the State Department. The State Department is a valuable source of primary source information, especially the Bulletin, Current Documents, and the Foreign Relations of the United States series. A major source of declassified documents, mostly from the CIA, comes from CIA Research Reports and the National Security Archives. These documents provide a more complete picture of CIA activities and an inside view of events during the period in question. Another valuable source of primary material comes from U.S. Congressional hearings and other related proceedings that have investigated the Agency with regards to clandestine activity.

The thesis will make a contribution to the existing literature on American foreign policy towards Central Africa and the activities of the CIA, because it combines information from a variety of sources, both primary and secondary, in order to highlight the role the CIA played in Central Africa during the period. As previously mentioned, the study combines several different disciplines, producing a synthesized work on a topic that has heretofore been accorded far less attention than its importance warrants.

CHAPTER II

UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY IN CENTRAL AFRICA

Chapter II addresses the United States (U.S.) foreign policy towards Central Africa during the period 1960-1990.¹ The chapter presents an overview of American foreign policy in general terms during the Cold War era. The focus then shifts from the general to specifically what the fundamentals of American policy were towards Africa during the period. The chapter focuses on four time periods that shed insight into American policy and into the actions of the CIA. The selected time periods are significant because they were all periods of heightened American interest and activity in Central Africa. The actions the United States government pursued, and why it took those actions, are discussed in detail. It is not the intent of this chapter to delve into the policy nuances and differences regarding policy that can be found in each administration, but rather to provide a broad overview of American foreign policy.

The first period covers the early Congo Crisis that occurred during 1960-1961. During those years, the United States found itself increasingly involved in its first crisis

¹ Maps of Africa, Angola and Zaire can be found in Appendix A.

intervention situation in Africa.² The second section highlights the coming to power of a pro-Western leader who was, and who remains to this day, closely associated with the United States, Joseph Mobutu.³

The third section of this chapter provides an overview of American intervention, with the assistance of Zaire,⁴ in the Angolan Civil War of 1975-1976. This episode is particularly important since it is considered to be a classic example of superpower rivalry in Africa during the Cold War. The fourth period under review is the mid-1980s, when the Reagan administration repealed the so-called Clark Amendment which banned all assistance to Angola and proceeded to provide support to one of the factions fighting in the protracted Angolan civil war. Each of these four examples highlights American foreign policy during a time when the CIA was active in Central Africa.

This chapter lays a foundation for understanding the next chapter which emphasizes the actions of the CIA during the same time periods. The American foreign policy that is outlined in this chapter emphasizes the official United States policy position in Central Africa. This is done in order to contrast

² For the purposes of this study the word "Africa" refers to Sub-Saharan Africa.

³ Mobutu was known as Joseph-Desire Mobutu before changing his name in 1966 to Mobutu Sese Seko. This text uses the appropriate name for each time period.

⁴ Present day Zaire was known as the Republic of the Congo (or simply, "the Congo") until 1971 when the name was officially changed to the Republic of Zaire (or simply, "Zaire"). This text uses the appropriate name, both in the long and the short forms, for each respective time period. A map with both the old and the new country (and city) names is included in Appendix A.

the official position of the U.S. to what the CIA was actually doing at the same time. This chapter tells the official version of U.S. foreign policy regarding events as they unfolded, as interpreted by the policymakers.

OVERVIEW OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA

American foreign policy from the end of World War II through the end of the Cold War is characterized by Seyom Brown in The Faces of Power (1994), as the pursuit of three broad objectives: ensuring the nation's physical survival; the perpetuation of a vague belief in the American way of life; and the promotion of the economic well-being of the whole society.⁵ American foreign policy is defined by Brown as resulting from U.S. efforts to influence conditions outside of the country. These efforts are the result of judgments by decision makers that: a) a particular set of conditions is having, or will likely have, a significant impact on American interests; b) the behavior of the United States can significantly affect these conditions; and c) the expected benefits from a particular course of action are worth the expected cost.⁶

Brown hypothesizes that during the Cold War American officials believed that the basic liberties and economic well-being of the United States were jeopardized by the actions of

⁵ Seyom Brown, The Faces of Power: Constancy and Change in United States Foreign Policy From Truman to Clinton, 2d. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 3-4.

⁶ Ibid., 4.

the Soviet Union. The Soviets were seen as promoting a way of life that was at odds with the fundamental values of the United States, and as bent on imposing their system on the rest of the world. Thus, successive American Presidents during the Cold War attempted to stop the Soviet Union from enlarging its sphere of control and from gaining military superiority over the United States. In part, this was accomplished by strengthening the ability of other countries to resist Soviet aggression and pressure.⁷

United States foreign policy in Africa from 1960 to 1990 reflected many of the same issues and concerns that American decision makers faced around the world during the Cold War. At the same time, Soviet foreign policy on a global scale, including Africa, mirrored the American Cold War goal of stopping the other superpower from gaining an advantage. Each of the superpowers approached Africa in light of its own needs in countering the other great power. In other words, they each interpreted their own interests in terms of countering the influence of the other.⁸ Africa's position in the American foreign policy agenda increased or decreased during the period in response to perceived American Cold War interests as events occurred on the continent.⁹

⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁸ Naomi Chazen et al., Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 388.

⁹ Michael Clough, Free At Last? U.S. Policy Toward Africa and the End of the Cold War (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992), 5.

In a 1995 lecture at Ohio University, Professor Edward Baum identified three constants in United States policy regarding to Africa from 1960 to 1990. The first constant was the continuing American concern with containment. The second constant was that any human and physical resources sent to Africa were highly limited. Compared to other regions of the world, the United States did not send a great deal of resources to Africa throughout the period. Finally, the European affairs of the various former colonial powers continued to dominate American policy actions as they had in the pre-independence era. United States policy was closely tied to the former colonial powers because of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which was formed to counter the Soviet threat in Europe. After many African countries became independent, the United States continued to rely heavily on the former colonial powers when it came to determining official policy. The United States tied its policies in many ways to those of the former colonial powers of Europe.¹⁰

In his doctoral dissertation, Mark Owen Lombardi discusses the fact that in a foreign policy sense Africa remained "untouched" by the superpowers until 1960. He believes that Africa was not in the sphere of influence of either superpower prior to that time. Before that year, he agrees that the basic

¹⁰ Edward Baum, "U.S. Policy in Africa: U.S. Relations After 1960." Lecture presented at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, 17 April 1995.

principle regarding American policy towards Africa was the deferral of foreign policy issues to the European governments.¹¹

As the Cold War continued and expanded on a global scale to include Asia and Latin America, Africa became another region of confrontation between the superpowers. After 1960, the United States intensified its role of protecting Western interests as the leader of the "free" world. The U.S. saw successful expansion of the Soviet Bloc as an unacceptable option and believed the Soviet threat needed to be countered at every opportunity. Thus geopolitical factors played a central role in the execution of American policy towards Africa during the period.¹²

According to a 1991 U.S. Department of State Dispatch article, American stakes in Africa increased as European colonial rule ended in Africa. As that happened, the United States committed itself progressively to the development of a global free market economy. Africa thus became a focal point of superpower rivalry when several African states came under the control of Marxist and pro-Soviet regimes. The United States was particularly disturbed when the Soviet Union began supplying those states with military equipment, combat forces, and

¹¹ Mark Owen Lombardi, "Superpower Intervention in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Framework for Analyzing Third World Conflicts", 2 vols. (Ph.D dissertation, Ohio State University, 1989), 1:11.

¹² David D. Nhlabatsi, "Making Friends With Apartheid: Constructive Engagement, The United States and South Africa" (Master of Arts thesis, Ohio University, 1995), 1-4 see also Zaki Laidi, The Superpowers and Africa: The Constraints of a Rivalry, 1960-1990, trans. Patrica Baudoin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 3-10.

development aid. Tensions remained high until the early 1990s when political changes in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries, as well as the increase of East-West cooperation, helped to lessen tensions in Africa.¹³

A 1992 article in the U.S. Department of State Dispatch explained the three guiding principles of American diplomacy in Africa since 1960, known as "the year of African independence." These principles emphasized the promotion of: political stability, economic reform and democracy. The article listed six reasons why Africa was important to U.S. interests. The first revolved around the fact that the 47 nation voting block of Sub-Saharan Africa countries was important in international organizations. The second was that the continent possessed important natural resources. Third, the United States needed to buy African raw materials, while Africa needed capital investment. Fourth, the African continent was strategically located to further American interests. Fifth, regional conflicts and economic instability made Africa a potential arena for rivalry and confrontation between external powers. Finally, Africa was of particular interest because of the large numbers of Americans of African descent.¹⁴

Peter Schraeder, in United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa (1994), argues that relations between the United States

¹³ U.S. Department of State, "Feature: Sub-Saharan Africa and the United States," Dispatch 2 (30 December 1991): 912.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Feature: Sub-Saharan Africa and the United States-Part II," Dispatch 3 (6 January 1992): 4.

and Africa have been marked by periods of both continuity and of change, change that sometimes occurred because of periods of crisis that necessitated the attention of American policymakers. He argues though that American policy has consisted mostly of continuity instead of change. There is little doubt, however, that during the Cold War era American interest peaked or waned at various times as when one administration after another placed Africa on the policy "back-burner." Schraeder goes so far as to title a section of his book, "Africa as a Policy Backwater."¹⁵

While some U.S. Presidential administrations entered office with high hopes and expectations regarding their foreign policy towards Africa, most saw American foreign policy continue the same course with minimal involvement from senior officials, formulation and execution of policy was left to junior officials because of what Peter Schraeder terms the "National Security Bureaucracies" of the CIA, the Defense Department and the State Department. Senior decision makers from successive administrations busied themselves attending to more pressing affairs in both the domestic and international arenas. Only when a crisis sparked the interest of the senior echelon did active policy regarding Africa take place; and even then it was often as a reaction to events that had already occurred on the continent.¹⁶ At a White House Conference on Africa in 1994,

¹⁵ Peter J. Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 5-7.

¹⁶ Ibid.

President Clinton succinctly summarized the history of U.S.

Foreign policy in Africa from 1960 to 1990:

For decades we viewed Africa through a Cold War prism and through the fight against apartheid. We often, I think, cared in past years more about how African nations voted in the United Nations than whether their own people had the right to vote. We supported leaders on the basis of their anti-communist or anti-apartheid rhetoric perhaps more than their actions. And often the United States - because it was a long way away and we had a lot of other problems - just simply ignored the realities of Africa.¹⁷

1960-1961 THE EARLY CONGO CRISIS

The Eisenhower administration in its second term (1957-1961), like previous administrations, deferred on the independence process in Africa to the Western European powers. In 1960 a total of 17 African states gained their independence without incident. The exception was the Belgian Congo in Central Africa, where imminent independence triggered a wave of ethnic warfare, rioting and the gradual disintegration of the new country because of the secession of the resource rich Katanga Province. The Eisenhower administration developed a close working relationship with the United Nations to stabilize the situation and to stop any possible Communist intervention.¹⁸

¹⁷ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Remarks to the White House Conference on Africa, June 27, 1994," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1994, Book 1, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office (GPO), 1995), 1150.

¹⁸ James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., American Foreign Policy: FDR to Reagan (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 134.

In his memoirs, President Eisenhower explained the American perspective towards events in the Congo during what he called the "turbulent summer" of 1960:

... with a position of leadership in the Free World, we did not want to see chaos run wild among hopeful, expectant peoples and could not afford to see turmoil in an area where the Communists would be only too delighted to take an advantage.¹⁹

Michael Williams in his doctoral dissertation provided a summary that placed the early Congo Crisis in the context of superpower intervention:

... the Congo crisis epitomized the relationship between the decline of the old European order, the emergence of the newly independent countries, and the struggle for global supremacy between the United States and the Soviet Union as they struggled to propagate their universalist doctrines.²⁰

Elise Forbes Pachter in her doctoral dissertation "Our Man in Kinshasa (1987)," stated that events in the Congo rapidly propelled this Central African country into the forefront of East-West politics and American foreign policy during the Cold War. The initial reason for U.S. involvement was to halt the progression of communism. This rationale broadened over time to one of simply preserving the Congo as a country. Unity of the state became of the utmost importance because it would avoid

¹⁹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961 (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 572.

²⁰ Michael Wayne Williams, "America and the First Congo Crisis, 1960-1963," Ph.D dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 1991 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1991), No. 9233701, 3.

chaos which would, in turn, deter the communists. A strong central government was the only way to accomplish these goals. These tenets of U.S. policy were to become the basis of continued American involvement in the Congo/Zaire for the duration of the Cold War.²¹

Zaki Laidi in The Superpowers and Africa (1990), saw economic motives at work behind American policy at the time:

At the outset the United States did not have any interests to preserve in the country ... At the very most, it would have liked to maintain its privileged right of access to this imposing country's cobalt and copper mines.²²

Zaki Laidi's position regarding American economic interests was shared by Henry Jackson in From the Congo to Soweto (1982). Jackson stated, "Anticommunism, however, was not the sole motivation of the incipient American policy. It was not ideology but rather economics which imposed the decisive influence."²³ There were American interests at stake in the Katanga province and elsewhere in the Congo. For example, Mobil Oil had \$12 million invested in service stations around the country. Morgan Guarantee Trust and American Metal Climax were also heavily invested in the Congo. There were \$2.5 billion in

²¹ Elise Forbes Pachter, "Our Man in Kinshasa: U.S. Relations with Mobutu, 1970-1983, Patron-Client Relations in the International Sphere," Ph.D dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1987 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1987), No. 8716678, 80-84.

²² Zaki Laidi, The Superpowers and Africa, 14.

²³ Henry F. Jackson, From the Congo to Soweto: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Africa Since 1960 (New York: William Morrow, 1982), 32.

Western investments in the Congo, with American corporate ownership totaling about one percent of that figure. At the time, the South Kasai province produced around eighty percent of America's industrial diamonds. According to Jackson, American ideology and economics "converged" to give direction to American policy.²⁴

The Congo had been colonized by the Belgians who controlled the territory since the Berlin Congo Conference of 1885. It was created artificially into a multi-ethnic and diverse modern state that was scarcely able to function as an independent country when independence was granted. "The Republic of the Congo (Leopoldville)," the State Department asserted in a policy report, "achieved independence abruptly by comparison with other recently independent African states and, in retrospect, without adequate preparation."²⁵ In the late 1950s passive resistance to Belgian rule by the Congolese and their refusal to compromise on the independence issue became widespread in the Belgian Congo. In 1959 extensive rioting broke out in the capital and other cities throughout the colony. Professor Winsome Leslie, in her book, Zaire (1993), described the situation and the Belgian reaction:

The Belgium government quickly lost confidence in the future of the Congo as a viable colony but proved incapable of constructing a coherent plan for decolonization. By 1960 Belgium had hastily convened

²⁴ Ibid., 32-33.

²⁵ U.S. Department of State, U.S. Participation in the UN: Report by the President to the Congress for the Year 1960 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1962), 42.

a Roundtable Conference to discuss Congolese independence.²⁶

In January 1960 the Roundtable Conference opened in Brussels. The Conference was the last chance that the Belgians had to establish an amicable independence arrangement on terms with which they would be comfortable. The Congolese delegation achieved a victory when the Belgians agreed that the date of accession to independence would be June 30, 1960. The Belgians envisioned an arrangement whereby the Congo would be independent, but would remain closely tied economically and politically to Belgium.²⁷ This Belgian vision of the future did not last long after independence, but at the Roundtable the Belgians felt that they could maintain de facto control of an independent Congo, in effect with business as usual. The reasons were as follows, there was little in the way of a trained government with institutions that could endure the abrupt transformation from colony to independent country without close Belgian supervision. Furthermore, the Belgian Congo suffered from inexperienced and fragmented political leadership on the eve of independence. The politicians had a limited capability to govern because of the lack of Belgian preparation for independence.

²⁶ Winsome J. Leslie, Zaire: Continuity and Political Change in an Oppressive State (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 19.

²⁷ Jean Stengers, Congo: Mythes et Réalités, 100 Ans d'Histoire (Congo: Myths and Realities, 100 years of History) (Paris: Editions Duculot, 1989), 259-260.

Internally, the Congolese political landscape was dominated by two main factions. Patrice Lumumba personified the "radicals," who were committed to "authentic" independence from Belgium, in both an economic and political sense. William Minter in King Solomon's Mines Revisited (1986) described Lumumba as a "charismatic populist leader with extraordinary skills of persuasion," and "he was responsive to popular demands for rapid changes."²⁸ The Congolese radicals stressed the position of nonalignment in international affairs. They enjoyed an extensive amount of grass roots support. Other prominent radicals included Antoine Gizenga and Pierre Mulele.²⁹

The other major faction were the "moderates," who were considered to be pro-Western and who enjoyed the support of the Belgians, the other Western powers, and the politically conservative multinational corporations operating in the Congo. The moderates included such political figures as Joseph Kasavubu, Moise Tshombe, Joseph Ileo, Cyrille Adoula and Joseph Mobutu. The moderates supported close cooperation with Belgium after independence. The leaders of the two factions, Patrice Lumumba and Joseph Kasavubu thus represented different views of how the Congo should be run after independence.³⁰

As a result of the Roundtable Conference in Brussels, elections were held in the Belgium Congo in May 1960 to select

²⁸ William Minter, King Solomon's Mines Revisited: Western Interests and the Burdened History of Southern Africa (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 141.

²⁹ Leslie, Zaire, 20.

³⁰ Ibid.

the leadership of the new transitional government. Voting in the elections took place largely along ethnic lines. Patrice Lumumba's party, which was favored to win, received only 24 percent of the new Assembly's 137 seats. Lumumba's position was weakened because he was forced to form political alliances with other Congolese political parties, including those outside of the "radical" faction to the moderates in order to form a government. The situation forced an uneasy compromise between Lumumba and Kasavubu, because of their opposing views in the Congolese independence movement.³¹ However, the arrangement was almost doomed to failure from the start. The fragmented nature of Congolese politics made any sort of compromise government of conciliation virtually impossible. Jackson explained the disjointed state of the Congolese leadership in the face of intense pressure shortly after independence:

One month after independence the Central Congolese leadership thus split like an exploding atom, as different leaders searched in hope for an external solution to an internal crisis that was unmistakably out of their control.³²

The Belgians immediately considered Patrice Lumumba to be an unacceptable choice for Prime Minister because he was from the radical faction and was opposed to the official continuation of any type of Belgian presence in the Congo. The Belgians favored the moderate Joseph Kasavubu as the best candidate for

³¹ Ibid.

³² Jackson, From the Congo to Soweto, 29.

Prime Minister. In a compromise arrangement Patrice Lumumba became the Prime Minister and Joseph Kasavubu became President, a post that was originally intended to be honorific only. The Belgians and other Western powers hoped that he would act as a restraining force to keep Lumumba in check. However, the role of President was soon to take on increased importance, as political infighting in the Congo and Western resistance to Lumumba grew. Kasavubu came to be seen as the only immediate option that the Western powers could find who was acceptable to govern the young country.³³ In "The Zairian Crisis and American Foreign Policy (1985)," noted Zairian scholar Crawford Young outlined the American reaction to Lumumba:

From the Washington perspective, the greatest danger in the Congo crisis was the emergence of a power vacuum in which the mercurial and unpredictable Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, would invite Soviet guidance.³⁴

Initially there was no known communist in the top ranks of the Congolese leadership. The State Department's "Analytical Chronology" of events at the time of independence outlined the American view of the complexities of Congolese politics, "In general, the line between pro-Communism on the one hand and hyper-nationalist, 'anti-colonialist', Marxist thinking on the

³³ U.S. Department of State, "Analytical Chronology of the Congo Crisis," January 25, 1961, Declassified Documents Reference System (Woodbridge, CT: Research Publications, 1977) Document (1977) 319D, 2.

³⁴ Crawford Young, "The Zairian Crisis and American Foreign Policy," in African Crisis Areas and U.S. Foreign Policy, eds.

other is very difficult to draw in the Congo..."³⁵ Lumumba had spoken out frequently against communism, and there were reports that communists had helped finance his campaign. For example, a CIA information report stated that Lumumba had agreed to accept propaganda materials for his campaign from the Belgian Communist Party after promising that he was planning on nationalizing the Congolese economy.³⁶ During a National security Council (NSC) meeting on May 5, 1960 Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles described Lumumba in the following manner, "He was irresponsible, had been charged with embezzlement, was now being offered bribes from various sources and was supported by the Belgian Communists."³⁷ At any rate, he was considered by the Western powers to be very smart and charismatic, but on the other hand to be an "anti-white rebel-rouser." By the time of independence, Congolese politics were fragmented; and a clear distinction between those considered by the Western powers, including the United States, to be anti-Western radicals, and those considered by those same powers to be moderate, had developed.³⁸ Professor Rene Lemarchand, in "The CIA in Africa"

Gerald J. Bender, James S. Coleman, and Richard L. Sklar (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 211.

³⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Analytical Chronology," 3.

³⁶ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Information Report: Meeting Between Lumumba and the Belgian Communist Party Leaders at Liege," February 1960, CIA Research Reports: Africa, 1946-1976, (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1983), Reel 1, Document 0421, 1.

³⁷ U.S. Department of State, "443d Meeting of the National Security Council," 5 May 1960, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960: Africa, Vol. 14, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1992), Document 101, 274.

³⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Analytical Chronology," 2-3.

(1978), explained that U.S. policy toward Africa was partially determined by the perceived threat to U.S. interests posed by African leaders, who rightly or wrongly are identified as "enemies."³⁹ Lumumba was quickly identified as an enemy who could jeopardize American interests in the Congo.

Economic difficulties were also an area of concern on the eve of independence. The Belgians were already pulling out of the Congo and taking their money with them. Capital flight and public debt had reached immense proportions. At the same time, Belgian investments in the Congo amounted to \$3.5 billion, and the Belgians consequently felt that they should have a say in the affairs of the newly independent country in order to protect their investments.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the Congolese economic situation, and the perceived inability of the Belgians to address the situation, contributed to the American impulse to fill the vacuum and intervene in the Congo. The Congo was in poor economic condition and the U.S. did not want to lose any stakes in the Congo. A CIA report at the time of independence noted that "... the Congo may accept any Communist offers of economic aid."⁴¹

³⁹ Rene Lemarchand, "The CIA in Africa: How Central? How Intelligent?" in his American Policy in Southern Africa: The Stakes and the Stance (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978), 353.

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Analytical Chronology," 1.

⁴¹ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary: Government of Joseph Kasavubu," 30 June 1960, CIA Research Reports, Reel 1, Document 0427.

Prior to independence the United States was content with deferring to the Belgians on matters concerning the Congo. The Department of State directed the American ambassador to Belgium, William Burden, to discuss what plans Belgium had in store for its colony. The ambassador was given the following instructions concerning the U.S. position regarding the Congo to carry to the Belgians:

... US is of course interested in maintenance political stability in Congo and general alignment of area with Free World. We believe that the aims of present Belgian policy in the Congo are laudable and hope they can be attained in harmonious cooperation.⁴²

A series of State Department telegrams just prior to independence indicated that there was a high degree of American unease over the increasingly unstable picture in the Congo. Political instability, lack of leadership, ethnic tensions, and the possible Katanga succession were all identified as areas of concern.⁴³ Each of these areas of concern was also a justification for increased American action in addressing the early Congo Crisis.

African scholar David Gibbs in The Political Economy of Third World Intervention (1991) stated that there were two main reasons why the Belgians decolonized so rapidly. The dominant view is that the Belgians panicked in the face of growing

⁴² U.S. Department of State, "Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Belgium," 8 January 1960, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960: Africa, Document 94, 259.

⁴³ Ibid., Documents 102-105, 275-279.

disorder in the Congo and opposition from the Belgian Socialist Party and the Catholic church to any type of massive repression to maintain order. A second explanation is that the Belgians decolonized rapidly because they wanted to create disorder which would then give them the opportunity to reassert control.⁴⁴

A telegram from the American Consulate General in Leopoldville (1960) addressed this issue:

... we have maintained hands-off policy in this confused political struggle. As Belgian influence declines and in absence any show of US interest in means for achieving greater political stability in this country, question arises as to whether we should not now attempt more positive influence despite risks involved.⁴⁵

Even as the American position was still under discussion, the Republic of the Congo was born. President Eisenhower, who would soon be deeply involved in events in the new Republic, sent a congratulatory letter to President Kasavubu of the Congo in which he stated, "... the Government and people of the United States look forward to close and friendly relations with the government and people of the Republic of the Congo."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ David N. Gibbs, The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crisis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), Chapter 3, Note 1, 236.

⁴⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Telegram From the Consulate General at Leopoldville to the Department of State," 14 June 1960, Foreign Relations of the United States: Africa, 1958-1960, Documents 102, 275.

⁴⁶ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Message to President Kasavubu on the Occasion of the Independence of the Republic of the Congo, June 30, 1960," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960-1961 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1961), Document 216.

At the time of Congolese independence the United States began to get seriously interested in events in the Congo. The position of Belgium was rapidly weakening, and the Americans sought to fill what it considered to be a developing policy void. The decreasing amount of influence exerted by the Belgians regarding the situation in the Congo gave rise to a discussion in Washington as to what role the United States should play there, the United States had both ideological and economic reasons for becoming involved in the Congo. At the beginning of summer 1960, the Eisenhower administration was not particularly interested in the Congo. Arrangements and issues concerning Congolese independence continued to be handled through the American Embassy in Belgium. The influence of Africanists in the State Department was insignificant.⁴⁷

June 30, 1960 was the Congolese day of independence or as Madeline Kalb in The Congo Cables (1982) called it, "the day trouble started."⁴⁸ The official ceremonies in the capital city of Leopoldville went smoothly until Patrice Lumumba began his speech with a fiery tirade against the Belgians and their colonial rule. In the presence of King Baudouin of Belgium and other dignitaries Lumumba denounced the era of colonial rule and

⁴⁷ Laidi, The Superpowers and Africa, 14-15.

⁴⁸ Madeline G. Kalb, The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa - From Eisenhower to Kennedy (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1982), 3.

he reportedly said, "From today we are no longer your Makak! (Monkeys)." ⁴⁹

Lumumba also denounced Belgian colonial policy as having brought nothing but slavery and oppression to the Congo. Lumumba's speech was picked up by the international press, and its impact soon reached far beyond the borders of the Congo. The Russians were delighted by the discomfort of the Belgians, while the American reaction was described by Kalb as "wary." Lumumba apologized by the end of the day, but the Western powers continued to express concern about the new Prime Minister and his alleged sympathetic tendencies towards the communists. American policymakers were convinced that Lumumba by his remarks had finally shown his true colors, and that he would continue to cause trouble. ⁵⁰ William Minter in his article entitled, "The Limits of Liberal Africa Policy: Lessons from the Congo Crisis" (1984), explained the ramifications of Lumumba's independence day speech:

... a consensus quickly crystallized that Lumumba was unreliable, anti-Belgian, anti-white, perhaps a Communist, and probably crazy. In the ensuing months this premise lay behind almost every Western act in the changing Congo drama. ⁵¹

⁴⁹ Quoted by Colin Legum in his Forward to Congo My Country, by Patrice Lumumba, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1962), xiv. Whether Lumumba actually made this statement has been the source of academic debate. The French word *Singes* has also been used in quoting this sentence. The phrase did not appear in the official text of the speech given on that day. For an interesting discussion on this topic see Chapter 3, Note 30 in Gibbs, The Political Economy of Third World Intervention, 237.

⁵⁰ Kalb, The Congo Cables, 3-4.

⁵¹ William Minter, "The Limits of Liberal Africa Policy: Lessons from the Congo Crisis," Transafrica Forum, 2 (Fall 1984): 31.

Winsome Leslie, in Zaire, stated that Lumumba's speech "... injected a feeling of foreboding into the festivities and underscored that fact that beneath the veneer of stability were divisive issues that had been ignored ..." ⁵²

Less than a week after the independence day ceremonies the Congolese army mutinied and chaos ensued as ethnic groups and rival factions vied for control of the new nation. On July 5, in response to soldiers' demands for change, a senior Belgian officer in the Congolese Army, General Emile Janssens, announced that there would be no changes in the Army and that all Belgian officers would remain in charge. But the Belgians had underestimated the level of resentment to their colonial domination, for in response the soldiers immediately mutinied and began rioting in the streets. The rebellion rapidly spread throughout the country, with whites especially becoming targets of the violence. ⁵³ The United States Embassy began evacuating American citizens and the Embassy was stoned by a mob on July 8. At the time there were about 2,000 Americans, mostly missionaries, in the Congo. ⁵⁴

On the previous day, July 7, the newly independent Republic of the Congo had been admitted to the United Nations (U.N.). The entry of the Congo into the U.N. was the start of an extended period of involvement by the United Nations in the

⁵² Leslie, Zaire, 20.

⁵³ Gibbs, The Political Economy of Third World Intervention, 81-82.

⁵⁴ Pachter, "Our Man in Kinshasa," 80.

Congo.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, Belgian troops had begun to arrive, uninvited, into the Congo, ostensibly to protect European lives and property. Winsome Leslie in Zaire explained the situation this way:

Continued instability in the Congo prompted Belgian military intervention, ostensibly to protect the European population; but from the point of view of the Congolese government, this action violated national sovereignty.⁵⁶

The United States Report on the United Nations from the President to Congress for 1961 stated the American view: "It was against this background of chaos, secession and foreign intervention that the Congolese, with U.S. encouragement, appealed to the United Nations for assistance."⁵⁷ In early July, the Congolese government broke diplomatic relations with Belgium and appealed to the United Nations Security Council for military assistance and to secure the exit of Belgium troops. The request to the United Nations unintentionally brought the crisis to center stage as the great powers found themselves forced to formulate policy in response to the situation.⁵⁸ For its part the United States welcomed United Nations involvement in the Congo. This may have been because the United Nations largely served the function of promoting Western interests, "Throughout

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, U.S. Participation in the UN: 1960, 42-43.

⁵⁶ Leslie, Zaire, 21.

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State, U.S. Participation in the UN: Report by the President to the Congress for the Year 1961 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1962), 59.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

its four year operation from 1960-1964, the United Nations Force indirectly promoted a pro-Western and primarily pro-American orientation."⁵⁹

The U.N. Security Council met on July 13 for a seven hour meeting to review the rapid pace of events and to determine what actions should be taken by the body. The Security Council voted to provide the Congo with military assistance, and called on Belgium to withdraw its troops. After briefly considering sending troops on its own, the United States opted to support the actions of the Security Council.⁶⁰ During this crucial period in the determination of American policy, the United States acted along two fronts. First, the Americans declined the Congolese request to supply their own troops, in favor of United Nations action. Second, the United States "... escalated its diplomatic and intelligence action to construct a coalition of Zairian leaders and factions hostile to Communist penetration and Soviet guidance."⁶¹ Within three days the United Nations Force in the Congo had been built up to over 4,000 troops, mostly from other African states.⁶² The United States did not send any combat troops of its own, confining its contribution instead to supplies and air transport. President Eisenhower in

⁵⁹ Jackson, From the Congo to Soweto, 33.

⁶⁰ For a detailed description of the U.S. position see statements by U.S. representative Henry Cabot Lodge in: U.S. Department of State, "Security Council Considers Situation in Republic of the Congo," Bulletin, 43 (1 August 1960): 159-161.

⁶¹ Young, "The Zairian Crisis and American Foreign Policy," 211.

⁶² U.S. Department of State, U.S. Participation in the UN: 1960, 44-45.

his memoirs stated that he had found it necessary as a consequence to request an additional \$100 million for the Mutual Security Fund that financed the United Nations operation in the Congo.⁶³ The United States was a generous contributor to the U.N. effort in the Congo and it expected to have a voice in influencing policy decisions made by the United Nations regarding the United Nations force deployed to the Congo.

On July 17, Prime Minister Lumumba issued an ultimatum to the United Nations representative in the Congo, Ralph Bunche, who was himself an American. In his message, Lumumba threatened to ask the Soviet Union to intervene in order to eject all Belgian troops from the Congo if the U.N. did not remove them by midnight on July 19. The Prime Minister's threat was a high stakes gamble which resulted in little except for additional pressure being exerted by the United Nations on Belgium to withdraw its troops. Lumumba's ultimatum, however, caused an increasing amount of alarm in Washington concerning Lumumba.⁶⁴ Peter Schraeder gave an account of the American reaction:

In a classic example of how conflict in a formerly obscure African country suddenly became transformed into a crisis situation, the very real threat of Soviet intervention served to push an already brewing debate in Washington over the ability to deal with the existing government in Zaire [the Congo] to the highest levels of the policymaking establishment. Debate among policymakers revolved around the potential threat to Western interests posed by Lumumba ...⁶⁵

⁶³ Eisenhower, The White House Years: Waging Peace, 575.

⁶⁴ Kalb, The Congo Cables, 24-25.

⁶⁵ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, 54.

The Soviet Union's response was to side with the radical Congolese and to denounce the intervention of Belgian troops into the Congo. The Soviets accused the Western powers of using the U.N. as a cover for direct military action to "liquidate" the Congo. A CIA intelligence summary dated July 14, 1960 summed up the CIA view of Soviet intentions, "... Moscow probably hopes to further its pose as the protector of newly independent African states."⁶⁶ By the end of July the CIA was reporting that the Soviet Union had toned down its rhetoric, but that a small party of Soviet representatives had arrived in Leopoldville on July 21. Their mission, in the Agency's view, was to serve as a direct link to Moscow from the Congo.⁶⁷

In late July Prime Minister Lumumba made an official state visit to the United States in order to bolster his public image and gain increased stature among the Western powers. Upon his arrival he stated, "We wish the Republic of the Congo to be unified, strong, and prosperous. We desire true democracy in our country ..."⁶⁸ Under Secretary of State C. Douglas Dillon later testified to the Senate Intelligence Committee (1975) that "... Lumumba impressed American Officials as an irrational, almost

⁶⁶ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Central Intelligence Weekly Summary: Appeal to the U.N. for Aid and Denunciations of Belgian Intervention," 14 July 1960, CIA Research Reports, Reel 1, Document 0429.

⁶⁷ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Central Intelligence Weekly Summary: Some Public Control by U.N. Forces," 28 July 1960, CIA Research Reports, Reel 1, Document 0432.

⁶⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Prime Minister of Republic of Congo Visits Washington," Bulletin, 43 (15 August 1960): 245.

'psychotic' personality."⁶⁹ Dillon went on to state that "... the willingness of the United States government to work with Lumumba disappeared after these meetings."⁷⁰ Shortly after Lumumba's visit a meeting was held in the Pentagon with representatives from several government agencies. During the meeting the idea of the possibility assassinating Lumumba was first discussed.⁷¹ The topic of the Lumumba assassination plot will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. But the outline of that plot is important because the fate that befell Lumumba and the resulting decomposition of the Congolese government began to play an increasingly greater role in official U.S. policy during this period.

Later in the summer of 1960 senior administration officials remained concerned about the possibility of Soviet military intervention in the Congo. A National Security Council meeting in early August discussed the situation with input from a newly prepared Joint Chiefs of Staff report and a briefing by Clare Timberlake, the recently appointed American ambassador to the Congo.⁷² The NSC concurred with the Joint Chiefs of Staff that in addition to United Nations actions, the U.S. "... must be

⁶⁹ U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, An Interim Report: Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975), 53. Hereafter cited as U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee, Assassination Plots.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 54.

⁷² U.S. Department of State, "Memorandum of Discussion at the 454th Meeting of the National Security Council," 1 August 1960,

prepared at any time to take appropriate military action as necessary to prevent or defeat Soviet military intervention in the Congo."⁷³ But throughout his tenure in office during the Congo Crisis, President Eisenhower remained opposed to the use of American combat forces in the Congo.

During the months of July and August 1960 the CIA reported on the continuing strife in the Congo and the role of communist influence. One factor underlying the unrest (in the opinion of the Agency) was Lumumba's "tyranny" and his use of favoritism to gain political influence. A second reason was that in its judgment none of the senior leadership in the young government understood their responsibilities. The Agency's third reason for the unrest was the role of communist influence there. In its judgment no less than six government ministers were considered to be under communist control.⁷⁴ Another CIA report later in August stated that the Soviet Union was continuing to bypass U.N. channels and to provide direct aid to the Congolese Government in the form of food, medical aid, technical specialists and transport aircraft.⁷⁵

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960: Africa,
Document 156, 372-375.

⁷³ U.S. Department of State, "NSC Action No. 2276," 12 August 1960, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960: Africa, Document 156, 375.

⁷⁴ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Information Report: Factors Underlying Recent Congo Developments," 3 August 1960, CIA Research Reports, Reel 1, Document 0435.

⁷⁵ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Central Intelligence Weekly Summary: Lumumba, the Katanga, and the U.N.," 18 August 1960, CIA Research Reports, Reel 1, Document 0440. A more detailed discussion from the CIA perspective on the influence of communism during the period is provided in the next chapter.

On August 11, Secretary of State Christian Herter briefed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the increasingly tense situation in the Congo. "The Congolese picture even as of now," he asserted "is one of very real uncertainty."⁷⁶ He then explained that the initial movement of some 12,000 U.N. forces into the Congo had been a success and that it had been accomplished with American military transport planes. He also addressed the fact that the Belgians were supporting the break-away province of Katanga. Secretary Herter charged that the Belgians had handled the entire situation in the Congo, even before independence, very poorly.⁷⁷

Throughout the remainder of August Eisenhower administration fears about Lumumba and the extent of communist influence in the Congo escalated. By the end of August the State Department was alleging that "... Moscow is making a determined and sustained effort to acquire extensive influence over the Congo."⁷⁸ The Cold War atmosphere fueled Washington's anxiety about the Congolese situation during the summer of 1960.

As events in the Congo became more unstable and confused, the United Nations began to play an increasing role in

⁷⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Briefing on the World Situation," 11 August 1960, Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Historical Series), Vol. 12, 86th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1982), 662.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 662-673.

⁷⁸ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Soviet Activities in the Congo," 31 August 1960, O.S.S./State Department Intelligence and Research Reports: Part XIII, Africa, 1941-1961, (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1980), Reel 1, Document 0444.

supporting the American position regarding events there. The U.S. and U.N. policies were very closely aligned during this period. A State Department telegram on August 16, which gave guidance to the American Mission at the United Nations prior to a Security Council session, summed up the American view regarding the United Nations mission in the Congo:

We believe UN withdrawal from Congo would prove calamitous. Certain result would be chaos in Congo with Lumumba probably turning to USSR for help. Further result would be intense cold war struggle for control of area with potential danger of conflict spreading beyond Congo.⁷⁹

In mid-August, Prime Minister Lumumba caused a further uproar among the Western powers by leveling a series of charges against the U.N. command and the Secretary-General himself regarding the use of United Nations forces in the Congo. Lumumba even threatened to demand the complete withdrawal of United Nations forces. Peter Schraeder considered the Lumumba rift with Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold on August 14 over the Katanga succession to be a major turning point in American relations with the Congo. To the consternation of American officials, Lumumba's demands were followed by the arrival in the Congo of one hundred Soviet bloc technicians and large amounts of equipment, including a squadron of seventeen transport planes.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission at the United Nations," 16 August 1960, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960: Africa, Document 176, 413.

⁸⁰ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy in Africa, 55.

After extensive consultations, the United States reaffirmed its mandate to operate in the Congo. For its part the United Nations Security Council supported the policy of non-interference set out by Secretary-General Hammerskjold in the Katanga dispute. The USSR's action in the U.N. were clouded in ambiguity. The Soviets wanted action, but then withdrew a protest resolution against the Secretary-General at the August 21 session. However, the CIA reported at the time that "Soviet officials who are working with the Congo Government will probably encourage Lumumba in further anti-UN and anti-Western moves"⁸¹

In consequence, Washington on August 25 decided to escalate its involvement in the Congo without signaling it to the outside world. On that day, the Special Group, which was the sub-committee of the National Security Council responsible for covert operations, met to discuss plans for an operation aimed at destroying Lumumba's position in the Congo. The meeting did not rule out any option when it came to the goal of removing Lumumba from power. The next day, Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles sent a cable to the CIA station in Leopoldville stating that Lumumba should be "removed." Language used in the session was vague, and the exact meaning of "removal" was never defined.⁸² What is clear is that that

⁸¹ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary: Feud With the United Nations," 25 August 1960, CIA Research Reports, Reel 1, Document 0445.

⁸² U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee, Assassination Plots, 15 and 60-61.

meeting was a turning point in the decision to remove Lumumba from office using "any means".

During late summer and early fall 1960, the Americans continued to rely on the United Nations as a foreign policy tool in order to accomplish its own policy objectives. A State Department memorandum provided interesting insight into the extensive degree of coordination between the U.S. and the U.N. in establishing policy towards the Congo:

There has been close consultation between the Department and New York and between USUN and Hammerskjold on detailed planning for action in the UN framework on both immediate and long-term aspects of the Congo problem.⁸³

In early September a break occurred between President Joseph Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba. Kasavubu had grown concerned over the course of Lumumba's governing coalition. The government was buckling under the constant pressure of having to deal with one crisis after another. The central government was weak and was unable to assert any substantial degree of authority in the Congo. Lumumba also made President Kasavubu nervous by continuing to send overtures to the Soviets, and by his increasingly authoritarian tone in dealing with the constant stream of state emergencies. The Western powers were also involved in intense lobbying and behind-the-scenes efforts to

⁸³ U.S. Department of State, "Memorandum From the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Hare) to Secretary of State Herter," 30 August 1960, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960: Africa, Document 193, 449.

encourage President Kasavubu to declare a new government.⁸⁴ On September 5, President Kasavubu ordered the dismissal of Prime Minister Lumumba and his cabinet from the government. Lumumba declared his dismissal illegal and then announced that he was dismissing Kasavubu from his post of President.⁸⁵

The political stand-off brought about a stalemate and a governmental crisis to the Congo. In order to address the situation, the United Nations Command secured the Leopoldville radio station and the two airports in the capital region in order to prevent further civil disorders and stabilize the situation. Those actions were largely seen as favoring Kasavubu. At the time, Lumumba enjoyed a large degree of support from the Congolese military and police. However, Kasavubu had a great deal of support from regional leaders and politicians. The situation resulted in a stand-off, with neither side able to dominate. On September 5, President Kasavubu named Joseph Ileo as his new Prime Minister. During this new crisis the Soviet Union supported Lumumba's efforts to regain control of the government, using strong rhetoric against the Western powers and the U.N. By then the CIA was reporting over 200 East Bloc personnel in the Congo.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Stephen R. Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1964 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 85-89.

⁸⁵ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, 57.

⁸⁶ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Current Intelligence Weekly Summary: Power Struggle Between President Kasavubu and Premier Lumumba," 8 September 1960, CIA Research Reports, Reel 1, Document 0462.

On September 12, Colonel Joseph Mobutu, the Chief of Staff of the Congolese army, arrested Lumumba, his former mentor.⁸⁷ On September 15, Colonel Mobutu went on the radio to declare that he was taking power in order to end the feuding between the two rival governments that had both been established during the previous two weeks. Peter Schraeder argued that Mobutu seized power with the allegation that political paralysis in the Congo was threatening to turn into civil war.⁸⁸ Mobutu created a College of Commissioners, made up largely of college students, to run the country until December 31.⁸⁹ Kasavubu was allowed to remain as the nominal President, while the real power increasingly shifted to Mobutu. All Eastern Bloc diplomats and advisors were given 48 hours to leave the country. In response to these moves, the United Nations and most Western countries quickly recognized the new Kasavubu government.⁹⁰

On October 24, 1960, in Amherst, Mass. Joseph C. Satterthwaite, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, gave a major policy address regarding the American position towards Africa. He stated that the United States needed to respect the ideals of self-determination. He also

⁸⁷ Colonel Mobutu had closely been associated with Lumumba and had been appointed by him as the Chief of Staff of the Congolese Army.

⁸⁸ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Towards Africa, 57.

⁸⁹ Mobutu did not return control of the Congolese government to civilian authority until March 1961. After which, he remained as Chief of Staff of the Congolese Army.

⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Analytical Chronology," 37-38 and U.S. Department of the Army, Zaire: A Country Study, Area Handbook Series, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1994), xviii-xix.

explained that the violence and breakdown of governmental authority in the Congo were exceptions to the rule of African independence. Assistant Secretary Satterthwaite went on to say that communist influence in Africa was certain to increase and that this force could pose a threat to the newly independent states on the continent. He explained that the United Nations, with American support, "... is carrying out an unprecedented emergency mission to restore order and open the way for the Congolese people to reconstitute and reinvigorate their nation."⁹¹ Satterthwaite then made his case that the U.S. and the Western powers were supporting the U.N. while the Soviet Union was sowing the seeds of dissent on the continent. "In contrast," he asserted, "the United States has from the first made clear its desire to keep the cold war out of Africa."⁹²

In early October, at the urging of American ambassador Clare Timberlake, the new Congolese government attempted to arrest Lumumba. The effort failed because the current United Nations representative in the Congo, Rajeshwar Dayal, felt that a political solution involving all factions, including Lumumba, was still possible. By October 10, Lumumba found himself under a unique sort of house arrest, holed up in his residence which was surrounded by supportive troops from the United Nations command. These soldiers were in turn surrounded by Congolese troops who had been sent by Mobutu to arrest Lumumba, but were

⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, "The United States and the Continent of Africa," Bulletin, 43 (14 November 1960):753.

⁹² Ibid.

unable to because of the U.N. troops who were guarding Lumumba in a state of "protective custody."⁹³

Thus, concentric surrounding rings of soldiers covered Lumumba's residence while the politicians and the great powers tried to figure out what action to take. By October 12, there were over one thousand soldiers of various nationalities surrounding Lumumba's house. The United Nations wanted to remain strictly neutral and not have Lumumba arrested. This was because of the future role that they felt he could play in a unity government. There was also the fact that he was still technically immune from arrest because of his status as Prime Minister, even though his government no longer existed. As a result of the stand-off, relations between the Mobutu government and the U.N. began to deteriorate.⁹⁴ "Despite the best efforts of the CIA and the U.S. Embassy in Leopoldville," according to Kalb, "Lumumba was still on the scene a month after Mobutu's coup."⁹⁵

On November 2, Ambassador Timberlake sent a telegram to the State Department outlining the situation and clarifying U.S. policy options. He felt that Lumumba was still a threat and opposed his restoration as a compromise political figure. American Ambassador Timberlake did, however, agree that no other leader had the leadership ability or charisma to unite the Congo. He lamented that the Congolese lacked the skills to lead

⁹³ Kalb, The Congo Cables, 134-136.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 134-136 and 141.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 139.

their own democracy. When looking ahead at the alternatives and the future of the Congo Crisis, Timberlake stated:

We see no quick solution and have no favorite son. ... Every time I look at this truly discouraging mess, I shudder over the painfully slow, frustrating and costly job ahead for the UN and US if the Congo is to really be helped. On the other hand we can't let go of this bull's tail.⁹⁶

A further clarification of the American position at the time can be found in a the Department of Defense letter sent on November 10th to Secretary of State Herter outlining the Defense Department position. The letter supported the common U.S. goals of: "Establishment of law and order in the Congo and creation of stable conditions for UN operations; and Establishment of a legally recognized and responsible Congolese government."⁹⁷

Another area of concern for the United States was the seating of the Kasavubu regime as the official government of the Republic of the Congo in the United Nations. On November 10 the Credentials Committee voted in favor of the American resolution to seat the Kasavubu regime. On November 22, after extensive debate, the General Assembly voted to approve the seating of the Kasavubu government.⁹⁸ In a major American policy victory, the

⁹⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Telegram From the Embassy in the Congo to the Department of State," 2 November 1960, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960: Africa, Document 254, 565.

⁹⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Letter From the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Douglas) to Secretary of State Herter," 10 November 1960, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960: Africa, Document 259, 571.

⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State, U.S. Participation in the UN: 1960, 53-54.

Mobutu-Kasavubu regime became the legitimate Congolese government and now became officially represented in the United Nations.

That development did not, however, serve to clarify the internal situation in the Congo. The situation was in fact further complicated in November when Antoine Gizenga, a Lumumba supporter and politician, left Leopoldville and established a rival Lumumbist regime in Stanleyville.⁹⁹ At that time there were several rival governments operating in the Congo: the Mobutu-Kasavubu government working through the College of Commissioners in Leopoldville; the limited and essentially non-functioning Ileo government; the Gizenga breakaway government in Stanleyville; and the Tshombe separatist government in Katanga.¹⁰⁰

On top of all these complications, on November 27, Patrice Lumumba escaped from his residence and left for Stanleyville to join his supporter Antoine Gizenga. He was quickly arrested by soldiers loyal to Mobutu and returned to Leopoldville. There he was placed in a military prison. The United Nations, which had protected Lumumba for so long, now opted to continue its policy of neutrality and did not attempt to rescue Lumumba. Lumumba's capture had the effect of propelling Gizenga, who was considered even more radical than he, into the role of leader of the

⁹⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, Zaire: A Country Study, xix see also Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1964, 110.

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Analytical Chronology," 49.

Lumumbists. The capture also enhanced Mobutu's position in Leopoldville. The new situation also had the effect of further raising tensions between Mobutu and the United Nations Command, which was concerned with the bad conditions under which Lumumba was being incarcerated. Finally, Lumumba's capture resulted in a new wave of debates in the United Nations over the situation in the Congo.¹⁰¹

By late December American diplomats in Leopoldville were increasingly convinced that communist agents were working in Stanleyville in support of the Gizenga government. There were rumors that the Soviet Union would expand its involvement in order to support the Lumumbists, complete with military aid. However, the Soviets were also confused by the rapid change of events, and they limited their action to public rhetoric only.¹⁰² The Soviet reaction reflects the relatively low level of attention and the trend of discontinuity shown during the early Congo Crisis by the Soviet leadership towards the situation in the Congo. After the expulsion of its diplomats in September 1960, the Soviet Union lost the ability to directly communicate between Moscow and Leopoldville.

In a general sense, the Soviets pursued an "at-the-least-cost" policy in the Congo. The Congo crisis developed poorly for the Soviet Union and the Western powers, along with the United Nations, were able to keep the Soviets at bay. Because the Soviets had limited resources to commit to the Congo, they

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 49 and 56.

could do little to influence events in the Congo, they pushed diplomatic activity at the U.N. to the hilt. The Soviet Union also took the opportunity to criticize the Western powers on a regular basis so that it could gain favor with the newly liberated countries of Africa. "The Congo crisis demonstrated to the Soviet Union the weakness of its means and the necessity for reexamining its ambitions ..."¹⁰³ However, Washington viewed the Soviet intervention as a significant threat to its interests.

American reaction to events in the Congo occurred in light of the strong anticommunist sentiment of the Eisenhower administration. David Gibbs argued that there is no evidence to support the claim that the Soviets actually sought to take control of the Congo. Even if the Soviets wanted to seize the country, they were incapable of doing so. At the height of Soviet intervention, the Soviets and Czechoslovaks had no more than 380 advisors in the Congo, against the 14,000 soldiers in the United Nations force, this did not make for much of a match and the Soviets knew it. Gibbs felt that the "Western security" argument of American intervention in the Congo greatly exaggerated the Soviet ability to influence events.¹⁰⁴

Washington acted on its view that Lumumba and the communists were a viable threat to American interests in the Congo. Consequently, the final weeks of the Eisenhower

¹⁰² Kalb, The Congo Cables, 170-171.

¹⁰³ Laidi, The Superpowers and Africa, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Gibbs, The Political Economy of Third World Intervention, 99.

administration saw continued concern that Lumumba would somehow escape his captors and return to power with the Soviets by his side.¹⁰⁵ An example of the concern over Soviet involvement in the Congo can be found in a briefing given by Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles at a National Security Council meeting on January 5, 1961. Dulles reported that from his separatist capital of Stanleyville, Antoine Gizenga had sent a request to the Soviets asking for armed intervention in the Congo. The Soviet Union acknowledged the request and continued its public rhetoric against the Western powers, but it declined to intervene militarily.¹⁰⁶

Additionally, the Eisenhower administration was concerned about the extent of chaos in the Congo. The 1961 report from the President to Congress on the United Nations expressed concern at the level of disorder: "... the Congo situation at the beginning of 1961 remained extremely precarious, with the country still far from stability and unity."¹⁰⁷ A CIA National Intelligence Estimate dated January 10 discussed the extent of the volatile situation in the Congo. The report said that there was no indication of any type of decisive outcome that would bring stability to the Congo. "Political instability on a grand scale, probably leading to increased violence and other

¹⁰⁵ Kalb, The Congo Cables, 170-171.

¹⁰⁶ U.S. Department of State, "473d Meeting of the National Security Council," 5 January 1961, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963: Congo Crisis, vol. 20, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1994), Document 1, 1.

¹⁰⁷ U.S. Department of State, U.S. Participation in the UN: 1961, 58.

excesses," it stated, "appears to be the most likely prospect for the Congo for some time to come."¹⁰⁸ From the CIA perspective, the specter of the Congo disintegrating and the resulting wave of chaos that would follow posed a serious threat of increased Soviet involvement, especially if the Soviets were to exploit the situation to meet their own agenda.

On January 17 Patrice Lumumba and two of his associates were removed from the military camp where they were being held prisoner and were flown to Elisabethville in the breakaway Katanga province. They were never seen again by independent eyewitnesses. An official of the Katangan government announced on February 10 that Lumumba and his colleagues had escaped from custody. On February 13 another Katangan government announcement reported that they had been killed by "angry Katangan villagers" during the previous day. A U.N. commission, formed to investigate Lumumba's murder, later determined that the three captives had been killed after arriving at the Elisabethville airport in Katanga on January 17.¹⁰⁹

The administration of President John F. Kennedy took office on January 20, 1961, in the midst of the chaotic situation in the Congo. In a briefing paper for a meeting between President Eisenhower and incoming President Kennedy on

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Special National Intelligence Estimate," 10 January 1961, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963: Congo Crisis, Document 2, 2.

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Editorial Note," Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963: Congo Crisis, Document 6, 16-17.

January 19, the extent of the threat from the Lumumbist Gizenga regime in Stanleyville was explained:

The longer the Stanleyville regime continues in power, the greater is the likelihood of a permanent division of the Congo which might become another source of protracted East-West conflict and of serious division among African states themselves.¹¹⁰

The new Kennedy administration walked into the middle of a very complex and complicated situation in the Congo that would not be easily resolved, and the international uproar over the death of Patrice Lumumba. William Blum in Killing Hope (1995), described what the Kennedy administration had to face just after it entered office, "The immediate and the long-term effect of Lumumba's murder was to make him the martyr and symbol of anti-imperialism all over Africa."¹¹¹

The Soviets energetically denounced Lumumba's death and declared their solidarity with the Gizenga government in Stanleyville. They even raised the possibility of Soviet support for a "war of national liberation" in the Congo. The threat of unilateral military intervention by the Soviets ensured attention at the highest levels in the new administration.¹¹² "Kennedy's initial response [to the Congo situation] reflected two important elements of his worldview,"

¹¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Briefing Paper Prepared in the Department of State," undated, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963: Congo Crisis, Document 7, 19.

¹¹¹ William Blum, Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Intervention Since World War II (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995), 159.

¹¹² Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, 59.

argued Schraeder: "containment of the Soviet Union and the cultivation of Third World nationalists."¹¹³

During the course of a congressional briefing on February 6, G. Mennen Williams, the new Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, provided insight into the policies of the new Kennedy administration regarding the Congo Crisis. Williams admitted that the Mobutu-Kasavubu government was not as strong as had been hoped. Mobutu had been hurt by his failure to stop the Gizenga regime from making military advances in the Stanleyville region. Williams stated that "... our overall objectives continue to be to support the United Nations ... and to keep out unilateral action on the part of anyone."¹¹⁴

Williams also addressed the fact that the United States wanted to establish peace and order in the Congo and that the best way to accomplish that was to strengthen the United Nations mandate. Williams believed that Lumumba should not be released until the military and governmental situations had stabilized.¹¹⁵ Williams was accompanied by Ambassador Timberlake, who at one point in the briefing expressed his frustration with the situation in the Congo. In response to a question about how he would characterize the current situation and future prospects

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "The Situation in the Congo," 6 February 1961, Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Historical Series), Vol. 13, 87th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1984), 93.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 93-95.

for the Congo, Ambassador Timberlake responded, "It is the damnedest can of worms that I have ever seen, frankly."¹¹⁶

In mid-February when the death of Lumumba was announced to a shocked world, the East-West debate heated up again in the United Nations. The Soviet Union released a statement listing a number of demands including the end of the U.N. Mission in the Congo and the dismissal of the U.N. Secretary General. The statement concluded with the following:

The Soviet Government considers it the sacred duty of all freedom-loving States to offer help. For its own part, it is prepared ... to give all possible help and support to the Congolese people and its lawful [Gizenga] Government.¹¹⁷

The next day, February 15, President Kennedy responded to the Soviet declaration in strong language, stating that the United States was clearly opposed to any type of unilateral action in the Congo for any reason. He called any such action "dangerous and irresponsible."¹¹⁸

The Kennedy administration's first initiative upon taking office was to seek a suitable leader who could transform the Congo into a stable, unified country. The man that it increasingly focused on was Colonel Mobutu, since it was he who had a firm power base in the Congolese military and was

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 107.

¹¹⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Soviet Five Demands Upon the United Nations as a Result of the Death of Lumumba," 14 February 1961, American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1961 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1965), Document 350, 765-766.

¹¹⁸ Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1964, 141 see also Mahoney, JFK: Ordeal in Africa, 73.

considered to be a Congolese political moderate and decidedly pro-Western. America's European allies supported the Kennedy administration in its leanings towards Mobutu. Washington quietly supported Colonel Mobutu by giving the Congolese military direct bilateral aid beginning in October 1962. This aid included vehicles, equipment, and military advisors.¹¹⁹

By 1963, the Kennedy administration had signed an official bilateral military agreement with the Republic of the Congo. Peter Schraeder argued that this agreement marked a shift in U.S. policy to act on the CIA's preference for a strong leader who could ensure stability in the Congo.¹²⁰ The man who was then carefully groomed for this role over an extended period of several years was, of course, Joseph Mobutu. In May 1963 Mobutu visited the United States and was treated like a visiting head of state. Mobutu visited the White House and was praised by President Kennedy for stopping communism in the Congo.¹²¹ By the end of 1963, Schraeder stated, the decision had been firm. "The obvious recipient of increasing U.S. attention was the Zairian military under the leadership of the CIA-cultivated and pro-Western Mobutu."¹²² According to Henry Jackson, "Mobutu beckoned not simply as the man of the hour, he became the only man convenient for the needs of American policy in the Congo."¹²³

¹¹⁹ Jackson, From the Congo to Soweto, 40-41.

¹²⁰ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, 66-67.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 69.

¹²³ Ibid., 41.

The close military ties established between the U.S. and the Congo under the Kennedy and the early Johnson administrations continued throughout the first half of the 1960s. The United Nations also assisted in the strengthening of the Congolese army in the hope that it would increase order and promote stability. Israel, too, became involved by training over two hundred Congolese paratroopers including Colonel Mobutu himself. The Israelis were interested in pursuing friendly relations with sub-Saharan Africa at the time in order to bolster their standing in the United Nations and the global community at large. With the millions of dollars in Western and American aid, Mobutu developed a professional army that was well trained and equipped. Because of his control of the Congolese military, Mobutu was able to again stage a coup in November 1965.¹²⁴

Central Africa became the region of the first superpower confrontation in Africa during the Cold War era. The situation in the newly independent Republic of the Congo brought it emphatically to the attention of U.S. policymakers beginning with the independence of the former Belgian Congo on June 30, 1960. The outbreak of civil strife in the Congo and the power vacuum created by the abrupt withdrawal of the Belgians created an opportunity for United States involvement. The Congo was strategically located and its economic assets made it attractive to both of the superpowers. Henry Jackson stated, "During the

¹²⁴ Ibid., 41-42.

four years of the Congo crisis (1960-1964), the United States succeeded in establishing itself as a dominant influence in the very heartland of Africa."¹²⁵

As shown in this section, the early Congo Crisis was the first major African test of American foreign policy in the Cold War era. The United States found itself progressively involved with events that occurred in the newly independent Republic. The foreign policy test took place at a time when East-West Cold War tensions had reached high levels.

It is important to remember the Cold War context during this era the Soviets appeared to be leading the space race, the Americans were concerned about a possible "missile-gap;" Cuba had fallen in the hands of Fidel Castro; and the Berlin Wall was constructed. The United States started out in the Congo as a passive observer, and became one of the central power brokers in the Congo Crisis. Because of President Eisenhower's policy determination, the United States avoided any type of direct military intervention involving American troops, and instead essentially co-opted the United Nations with its friendly, pro-American leadership, to accomplish its policy objectives.

The United States publicly interpreted its actions in the Congo as a campaign to stop the spread of communism. The "red menace" banner was waved to justify American actions to the world and to the American public. But as this section has shown, economic factors also played an unacknowledged, but

¹²⁵ Jackson, From the Congo to Soweto, 22.

central role in the development of American policy. That policy involved two directions, the United States officially did all it could to resolve the crisis, through international organizations like the United Nations and through diplomacy with the other Western powers. On the other hand, it was also pursuing a "quiet" course of action that was away from the press and the spotlight of public scrutiny. That undertaking involved the presidentially sanctioned use of the CIA in covert operations to accomplish American objectives behind the scenes, away from the limelight.

This two-dimensional U.S. foreign policy in the Congo was carefully crafted. Its aim was to maintain both an overt and a covert posture in order to accomplish its goals of avoiding chaos, stopping possible Soviet expansion and protecting American interests. One consequence of this policy was the extensive amount of leeway given U.S. Ambassador Clare Timberlake and CIA station chief in the Congo, Lawrence Devlin, to carry out this agenda. This allowed them in effect to essentially establish their own policies and simply inform Washington of what they had done.¹²⁶ That they were able to do so was partly a result of the rush of events and crises during the heyday of the early Cold War. Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy and their senior policymakers were occupied in many ways

¹²⁶ This type of delegated authority to officials abroad was reminiscent of British imperial diplomacy during the colonial era of the 19th century when British counsels and High Commissioners acted in a similar manner.

during the early 1960s and the early Congo Crisis only occasionally, when it peaked and became a matter that was deemed important enough to warrant their attention. This condition essentially allowed lower level bureaucrats from different agencies to set their own agendas which eventually became U.S. foreign policy in the Congo.¹²⁷ For example, in the case of the Lumumba assassination plot, vague guidance was given by President Eisenhower, which was then translated on down the line to CIA station chief Devlin to work out the details.

American foreign policy as it developed in the Congo served to offer hope to the Congolese about a positive, independent future and to assure the American public that they would remain safe from what was perceived as a significant communist threat that could potentially pose dangerous consequences if it were allowed to spread. These were the years when George Kennan's "Domino Theory" regarding the spread of communism (first put forward in 1947) dominated American Cold War strategic thinking. Kennan's theory was based on the premise that traditional Russian expansion was likely to endure, and that if communism gained a foothold in any given region of the less developed world, the other states in the region would fall like domino's as communism spread, toppling one country after another.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ For a detailed discussion of this topic, see Chapter 2 in Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, 11-50.

¹²⁸ Robert D. Schulzinger, American Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 208-209.

The United States was concerned about the spread of communism, but there were also diverse American interests that drove the determinations of the policymakers. In pursuit of its interests, the United States found itself willing to use any means available, including covert action, to ensure that the U.S. position would prevail in Central Africa. This pattern of American intervention to "shape" events led them to support and promote the fortunes of a Congolese leader who it thought would best align himself with American interests. That man was Joseph-Desire Mobutu.

1965 MOBUTU COMES TO POWER

By late 1965 the weak and fragmented state of the political situation in the Congo had again reached a stalemate, and once more Joseph Mobutu stepped in to take control of the Government in order to restore order.¹²⁹ On November 25, 1965, following the same pattern that he had established in his November 14, 1960 coup, Mobutu announced in the capital city of Leopoldville (later Kinshasa) that he was taking control of the government. He also announced the end of the First Republic and the beginning of the new Second Republic. Significantly, there was to be no contrition of a College of Commissioners in the new Republic to assist him in governing the country. Initially Mobutu characterized his action as a solution to "the present

¹²⁹ Crawford Young and Thomas Turner, The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 51-52.

political chaos" in the Congo, and not as a military coup. Mobutu, in a press conference, announced that an army colonel would be appointed to lead the new government and that he would be the chief of state for a five year term. Mobutu immediately sought to reassure the United States that the situation was under control and to stress ties of friendship.¹³⁰

In fact the CIA had encouraged Mobutu to carry out his second coup. By 1965, the Congo had become a major recipient of economic aid and the second largest U.S. arms client in sub-Saharan Africa. This aid was in addition to covert funds that were given to Mobutu by the CIA. Natural resources, like cobalt and copper, as well as Zaire's strategic location were also factors in supporting Mobutu.¹³¹ Consequently, in spite of his dubious record on political rights and economic management, Mobutu was hailed as a good friend and wise leader. "The corruption of the Mobutu regime was deemed tolerable so long as it kept Zaire in the Western camp."¹³²

A CIA Special Report on the Congo Situation shortly after Mobutu's coup described the situation in the Congo as having "improved." The report stated that Mobutu was making progress in combating some of the country's problems such as unemployment, food production and corruption. However the

¹³⁰ Kelly, America's Tyrant, 168-170.

¹³¹ Naomi Chazan et al., Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa, 400 see also Steven Weissman, "The CIA and US Policy in Zaire and Angola," 394-395.

¹³² Naomi Chazan et al., Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa, 400.

report emphasized that the new government lacked the skills and the personnel to impose its will throughout all regions in the country. Overall, the CIA considered the outlook for the Congo was still considered to be "bleak." On the positive side the report noted that the new Mobutu government was the most solidly pro-Western government in the history of the independent Congo.¹³³ The CIA used the report to justify its own actions and to highlight a perceived difference in the Congolese situation now that Mobutu was in charge. In reality the country continued to be beset by numerous problems and was beginning to suffer under the military regime imposed by Mobutu.

At the time of Mobutu's second coup in November 1965, the Cold War was continuing, unabated, on a global scale. In an address in Tucson on October 31, three weeks prior to the coup, U.S. Ambassador at Large W. Averell Harriman had stated that Soviet objectives remained basically the same as they had throughout the Cold War. He stated:

In Africa both the Chinese Communists and the Soviets have made serious efforts to penetrate and subvert a number of the newly developed nations, but there, too, they have met with little success.¹³⁴

The Mobutu-led coup of 1965 was a watershed event in relations between the Congo and the United States.¹³⁵ Finally

¹³³ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Special Report: The Congo Since the Mobutu Coup," 11 February 1966, CIA Research Reports, Reel 2, Document 0327.

¹³⁴ U.S. Department of State, "The Challenges to Freedom and Peace," Bulletin, 53 (29 November 1965): 866.

the Americans had a strong leader who could lead the Congo as a single entity, without the chaos and instability of the past five years since Congolese independence. The United States also considered itself fortunate to see a pro-Western ally on whom it could count, come to power in a vital region of the world that was potentially open to the spread of communism which would, in turn, jeopardize its economic interests. Part of the policy derived from the fact that there were other regions of more immediate concern in the world, and American policymakers could then move on to other more pressing matters, such as the increasing U.S. involvement in Indochina.

It is also interesting to note the lack of official information, for example, press releases, etc. that were put out by the United States government when Mobutu came to power. When Mobutu seized control of the government, the official American response was largely one of silence. Of course, at the same time, the U.S. government was pursuing other, more quiet options as it has during the early Congo Crisis. These behind the scenes measures were undertaken by government agencies like the CIA in order to ensure that the Americans got what they wanted in the Congo. Joseph Mobutu was the man that the United States felt it could trust to serve American interests.

¹³⁵ For those interested in reading more about the Mobutu coup of 1965 and the period leading up to the next major crisis with Cold War implications, the Angolan Civil War see, Kelly's America's Tyrant (1993) and Schatzberg, Mobutu or Chaos? (1991).

Consequently, the U.S. government was generally supportive of Mobutu during his initial year and a half in office. As Mobutu moved to consolidate his power, the CIA continued to praise Mobutu for his work in "making progress" to improve the situation in the Congo.¹³⁶ For its part the State Department was more skeptical than the CIA, it remained generally supportive of Mobutu.

But that era of good feelings did not last. By 1967 the State Department attempted to restrain Mobutu from what it had come to consider to be Mobutu's ill-conceived foreign and domestic policies. When Mobutu, in response, demanded that the American ambassador be recalled, he was ordered back to Washington and replaced.¹³⁷ The signal sent by Washington was not a positive one, Mobutu now felt that he could act as he pleased and Washington would respond. "As for Mobutu in Kinshasa [the capital city of Zaire]," Kelly stated, "he had now discovered that he could fire an American ambassador and still count on receiving patronage from Washington."¹³⁸

The remainder of the 1960s and the early 1970s was a period of quiet continuation of American support for Mobutu. During this period Mobutu moved to consolidate his power base in Zaire by imposing a series of measures designed to increase his dictatorial control over Zairian society. The economic

¹³⁶ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Mobutu and the Congo," 23 June 1967, CIA Research Reports, Reel 2, Document 0344.

¹³⁷ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, 76-77.

¹³⁸ Kelly, America's Tyrant, 190.

situation in Zaire improved in the early 1970s, only to collapse due to the drop in global copper prices in the mid-1970s, causing a severe external debt crisis.¹³⁹ As Zaire grew into an increasingly oppressive state, American foreign policy remained largely silent regarding the state of affairs in Zaire. The Johnson and Nixon administrations were preoccupied with events in Vietnam and there was little time to devote to other, less visible, regions of the world. There were no significant events in Central Africa that warranted Presidential attention.¹⁴⁰

Following President Nixon's resignation in 1974, the Ford administration continued along the same path by retaining many of the policies and officials of the Nixon administration. American foreign policy continued to be dominated by the continuing presence of Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger who remained an influential figure in shaping American foreign policy throughout both the Nixon and Ford administrations. The Portuguese military coup in 1974 that led to the independence of the African Portuguese colonies presented Secretary Kissinger with some of his most significant new policy challenges.

1975-1976 THE ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR

The Angolan Civil War is addressed in this section specifically as it relates to Central Africa and the American

¹³⁹ Young and Turner, The Rise of the Zairian State, 276.

relationship with Mobutu. Zaire played an important role in American policy throughout the Angolan Civil War, especially the activities of the CIA during the civil war were closely tied to Zaire.

The Ford administration interpreted the Angolan Civil War of 1975-1976 primarily through the prism of East-West rivalry in Africa.¹⁴¹ The civil war aroused increasing interest from both superpowers, and the CIA became deeply involved as the initially regional conflict expanded into superpower rivalry. Indeed, American foreign policy regarding Angola over the years often revolved around factors peripheral to the country itself. It is not inaccurate to say that at the heart of U.S. policy towards Angola was the American attitude regarding the Soviet Union and its perceived intentions. The fear of being perceived as "soft on communism" was the common thread tracing through Angolan policy of every American administration between 1960 and 1990.¹⁴²

Kenneth Maxwell, in "The Legacy of Decolonization" provided another motive for American entry into the conflict in Angola. Maxwell believed, "It was the Zaire connection, in particular, which trapped the United States in the Angola

¹⁴⁰ For information on this period see the chapter entitled "Historical Setting" by Rene Lemarchand in U.S. Department of the Army, Zaire: A Country Study.

¹⁴¹ Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann, The United States and Africa: A History, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 291-294. See also, Thomas J. Noer, "International Credibility and Political Survival: The Ford Administration's Intervention in Angola," Presidential Studies Quarterly 23 (Fall 1993): 771-785.

¹⁴² Gerald J. Bender, "American Policy Toward Angola: A History of Linkage," in African Crisis Areas and U.S. Foreign Policy,

crisis."¹⁴³ From late 1974 through 1975 Zaire was experiencing a major economic crisis due to the drop in copper prices in the international markets and to poor economic planning at home. Zaire's weak economic position increased the possibility that Zaire would default on its foreign debt. When American policymakers looked closely at the situation in Central Africa, Zaire appeared to have a key role in motivating the U.S. to become involved.

At the time, Mobutu was concerned about his own country's economic position and he felt it needed assistance in securing its borders to keep unfriendly Angolan factions out of power. Without this assistance he felt he could not continue to conduct business as usual, free from worry about his neighbors.¹⁴⁴ Mobutu used his influential lines of communication with Washington to influence American intervention from which he would benefit.

Professor Stephen Weissman during the 1976 Senate Angola Hearings concurred with Maxwell's assessment regarding the role of Zaire. He declared that, "A major reason for American involvement in Angola was to maintain good relations with

eds. Gerald J. Bender, James S Coleman and Richard L. Sklar (Berkley, University of California Press, 1985), 110.

¹⁴³ Kenneth Maxwell, "The Legacy of Decolonization," in Regional Conflict and U.S. Policy: Angola and Mozambique, ed. Richard J. Bloomfield (Algonac, MI: Reference Publications, 1988), 27. Another strong argument stressing the American-Zairian factor as a link can be found in Jackson, From the Congo to Soweto, 66.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, the man on whom Secretary of State Kissinger is banking to oppose Moscow's interests ..."¹⁴⁵

The roots of the Angolan Civil War can be found in the development of the three Angolan nationalist organizations in the 1960s that competed for power over time in Angola. When African colonies were gaining their independence throughout the continent, Portugal remained recalcitrant and refused to relinquish its colonies. As a result, Angolan nationalist insurgency began against the Portuguese in 1961 with the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) being the first such movement to conduct military operations against Portuguese authority inside Angola. The FNLA operated from bases located across the border in the Congo. Second, in the mid-1960s, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) began its armed hostilities against Portuguese control and established a base of operations in Zambia. The third faction, The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), began as an offshoot of the FNLA during the late 1960s.¹⁴⁶

The United States first declared its support for the self-determination of Portugal's African territories in 1961 in

¹⁴⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs, "Statement by Stephen R. Weissman," Angola, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976), 109.

¹⁴⁶ U.S. Department of State, "A Brief Chronicle of Events in Angola: Briefing to Members of the House Committee on International Relations by Joseph J. Sisco," 17 December 1975, The National Security Archive: South Africa: The Making of U.S.

compliance with the Kennedy administration's stance toward self-determination and self-rule for colonized peoples throughout the world. The Americans consequently began providing limited financial assistance to the FNLA during the 1960s. The United States during this period proceeded carefully to avoid alienating its North Atlantic Treaty ally, the Portuguese. The Americans were also cautious about continuing their use of military facilities in the Portuguese controlled islands of the Azores since it did not want to jeopardize that arrangement.¹⁴⁷

The Soviet Union established links with the MPLA through the Portuguese Communist Party during that same period. In his article, "The Soviet Stake in Angola: Origins, Evolution, Prospects (1988)" Alexander Alexiev wrote that the Soviets began supplying military aid to the MPLA after an official visit by the MPLA leadership to Moscow in 1960.¹⁴⁸ During the 1960s, the three nationalist movements did not pose any serious threat to the Portuguese control of Angola.¹⁴⁹ However, they did cause considerable expense for the Portuguese in terms of resources and manpower to counter gains by the insurgents.

Policy, 1962-1989, (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1991), Document 00549, 1.

¹⁴⁷ Kenneth Maxwell, "The Legacy of Decolonization," 9. See Note 192 for a description of opposing policies within the U.S. Government towards Portugal and the Angolan liberation movements.

¹⁴⁸ Alexander Alexiev, "The Soviet Stake in Angola: Origins, Evolution, Prospects," in The Red Orchestra: The Case For Africa, ed. Dennis L. Bark (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1988), 142.

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs, "Statement by Henry Kissinger," Angola, 9.

The Portuguese attitude toward colonization changed dramatically when the Portuguese military seized control of the government in an April 1974 coup. The new regime promptly announced that the era of Portuguese colonization was over, and then proceeded to grant independence to Portugal's African colonies, including Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe. On the other hand, in Angola the prospects for independence were clouded because of the continued rivalry between the three factions. Following the coup in Portugal, Zaire provided the FNLA military assistance. According to Kenneth Maxwell, Zaire used its influence with Washington to lobby for support for the FNLA. He described the FNLA as, "... little more than an extension of Mobutu's own armed forces."¹⁵⁰ UNITA, at the same time, received assistance from Zambia and China. As for the MPLA, during the summer of 1974 it was weakened and the Soviets appeared to give up on it for a time. However, in October of that year, Soviet military aid to the MPLA was resumed.¹⁵¹ The MPLA was having organizational problems during the summer of 1974 and so the Soviets suspended arms deliveries while the MPLA resolved its leadership crisis.¹⁵² Gerald Bender wrote that during this period, Henry Kissinger:

... never took into account the fact that the Soviet Union had dropped all support for the MPLA only one

¹⁵⁰ Maxwell, "The Legacy of Decolonization," 27.

¹⁵¹ U.S. Department of State, "A Brief Chronicle of Events in Angola," The National Security Archive: South Africa, Document 00549, 1.

¹⁵² Minter, King Solomon's Mines Revisited, 264.

month before the Portuguese coup or that the Soviets continued to withhold support for a period of approximately seven months.¹⁵³

The intense rivalry among the FNLA, MPLA and UNITA caused concern among the leaders of other African countries. These leaders persuaded the three Angolan factions and the Portuguese to discuss ending their dispute. The result of these talks was the Alvor Agreement of January 1975. Under the terms of the agreement, a transitional coalition government was established to organize the government and integrate the military factions, thus facilitating a peaceful transfer of power leading to independence on November 11, 1975. The Alvor Agreement also stated that the coalition government was to write a new constitution and prepare for national elections prior to independence.¹⁵⁴

According to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's statement in the Congressional Hearings on Angola before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, at the time of the Alvor agreement, the U.S. acted with restraint and supported the FNLA with "the most modest" help. In January 1975, shortly after the Alvor accord was completed, the United States provided the FNLA with a grant of \$300,000 with the blessing of Henry Kissinger's 40 Committee¹⁵⁵ of the National Security Council.¹⁵⁶ Henry Jackson

¹⁵³ Bender, "American Policy Towards Angola," 113.

¹⁵⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs, "Statement by Henry Kissinger," Angola, 9.

¹⁵⁵ The 40 Committee was an organ of the National Security Council with representatives from all foreign policy related

stated that, "... the fateful decision to support the FNLA in 1975 was the U.S. response to Soviet support of the MPLA."¹⁵⁷ South African journalist Allister Sparks provided some insightful background on the Angolan factions and outlined the reason for American opposition to the MPLA in his book The Mind of South Africa (1990). Sparks stated:

All three factions had received help from Communist countries at one time or another, but the MPLA had Marxist, anti-imperialist views and had openly criticized the United States for supporting Portugal against the liberation movements.¹⁵⁸

Perhaps in response, The Soviet Union and the Portuguese Communist party decided to enhance the MPLA's power through the increase of military aid. The MPLA thus had little incentive to adhere to the Alvor Accord. In March 1975 large shipments of Soviet arms began to arrive and fighting between the MPLA and the FNLA broke out.¹⁵⁹

John Marcum in The Angolan Revolution (1978) described the start of U.S. involvement in the Angolan crisis somewhat differently than Henry Kissinger:

Instead of preventative diplomacy to reinforce a compromise solution [the Alvor Agreement] ... the United States chose unilateral intervention to support a

agencies. The 40 Committee was responsible for the approval of covert operations on behalf of the National Security Council.

¹⁵⁶ Minter, King Solomon's Mines Revisited, 266.

¹⁵⁷ Jackson, From the Congo to Soweto, 64.

¹⁵⁸ Allister Sparks, The Mind of South Africa (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 303.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

victory by anticommunist forces.¹⁶⁰

There was an additional American motive at the time, "Angola was a prize worth fighting for, and a pro-Western Angola on the Zaire model seemed a real option."¹⁶¹

Whether or not the U.S. felt pressured by the MPLA into action, or simply engaged in a unilateral action, from fear of the spread of communism, the fact is that the conflict did escalate and by late January 1975 the 40 Committee of the National Security Council authorized covert funds for the support of the FNLA.¹⁶² The initial \$300,000 grant to the FNLA was the tip of the iceberg of what the United States would eventually covertly funnel to the Angolan factions during the course of the Angolan Civil War. Beginning in January 1975 and continuing until the end of the year, the United States actively supported the FNLA and UNITA during the Angolan Civil War. American support for the FNLA, and later for UNITA, was both of an overt and a covert nature. The covert aspects of the Angolan Civil War are addressed in the next chapter. The overt, or public, aspects of American policy continued to focus on the threat of Soviet expansion. Henry Jackson stated that Kissinger defined the Angolan civil war as "a campaign of Soviet adventurism."¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ John A. Marcum, The Angolan Revolution: Volume II, Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare (1962-1976), (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978), 257.

¹⁶¹ Minter, King Solomon's Mines Revisited, 263.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Jackson, From the Congo to Soweto, 64.

On March 23, 1975, military clashes erupted between the MPLA and FNLA. Throughout that spring Soviet arms, including mortars and armored vehicles, continued to arrive in Africa by both air and sea for the MPLA. As a consequence the MPLA was able to expand its territory at the expense of the FNLA. On July 9 all-out civil war began when the MPLA launched a full scale attack against both the FNLA and UNITA. By this time the FNLA was receiving extensive assistance from Zaire, including military training and the handling of military equipment. By mid-July, the military situation had deteriorated for the FNLA and UNITA because of the enhanced superiority of the MPLA forces.¹⁶⁴

Tensions mounted in Angola and on June 16, 1975 Senator Dick Clark, a Democrat from Iowa and head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, made a prophetic opening statement before beginning hearings on American Policy in Southern Africa to the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Clark said:

Angola could be thrown into a long and tragic civil war at or before independence. The first years of Angola's independence could be years of destruction rather than development, of suffering rather than improved living standards for the people. The deep political divisions within Angola have already marred the period of transition of independence. This was to have been a time for uniting the three liberation movements in a joint effort to map out Angola's economic and political future. Instead, there have been frequent clashes between the liberation movements

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Department of State, "A Brief Chronicle of Events in Angola," The National Security Archive: South Africa, Document 00549, 2-3.

in which hundreds have died, thousands have been injured. It would be tragic indeed if the people of Angola, having suffered so long under colonial domination, were catapulted at independence into a civil war.¹⁶⁵

Senator Clark and other Africanists in the Government stressed a policy of conciliation towards the Angolan factions to resolve the situation through diplomatic means.¹⁶⁶ The diplomatic option failed and the administration, under Secretary of State Kissinger's tutelage, proceeded to intervene directly in the Angolan crisis.¹⁶⁷

In June 1975 the character of the Angolan Civil War abruptly changed, with the arrival of the first Cuban military advisors to be used by the MPLA. Gillian Gunn in "The Legacy of Angola (1992)" outlined several reasons why the Cubans came to the aid of the MPLA. Gunn felt that the Cuban officials were simply maintaining their long standing ties with the MPLA leadership. In addition, the Cuban government also recognized the ethnic bonds that historically related many of its citizens to Africa and decided to use intervention in Angola to show commitment to the African cause of liberation. Furthermore, Premier Fidel Castro wanted to increase his prestige in the

¹⁶⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs, "Statement by Senator Dick Clark," U.S. Policy Toward Southern Africa, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976), 69.

¹⁶⁶ For an insightful discussion of the diplomatic option from a personal perspective see, Nathaniel Davis, "The Angola Decision of 1975: A Personal Memoir," Foreign Affairs 57 (Fall 1978): 109-124.

¹⁶⁷ Maxwell, "The Legacy of Decolonization," 28.

Third World by fighting neo-colonialism. Finally, Cuba by its intervention was pursuing its long standing policy of creating "many Vietnams" so as to dissipate the energy of the "imperialists."¹⁶⁸ Gunn also stated that a consensus was reached by scholars that the Cubans acted unilaterally, that is without consulting the Soviets, in deciding to go to Angola.¹⁶⁹ This is an important consideration since the Americans equated the Cuban intervention with Soviet intervention in Angola. Washington sincerely believed that the Cubans were acting on the orders of their Russian masters. Indirectly, this action by the Cubans forced the hands of the Soviets into choosing intervention in Angola.¹⁷⁰

By mid-summer 1975 the United States was completely preoccupied with Soviet intentions in Angola. The U.S. was supplying arms to the FNLA and UNITA and beginning to encourage South Africa to provide military assistance. In August South African troops entered Angola, ostensibly to guard a hydroelectric project in Angola and to be in close consultation with UNITA. The Americans encouraged South African participation in the Angolan civil war to further their aims in the region. Allister Sparks wrote that in order "... to boost the

¹⁶⁸ Gillian Gunn, "The Legacy of Angola," in The Suffering Grass: Superpowers and Regional Conflict in Southern Africa and the Caribbean, ed. Thomas G. Weiss, and James G. Blight (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992, 48.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ For a thorough discussion of this topic see the above two footnotes. Gunn described, in detail, the evidence to support his argument including a 1977 interview between Barbara Walters and Fidel Castro in which Castro denied any Soviet influence.

[American covert] shoestring operation, secret negotiations were held with South Africa, which was persuaded to intervene in support of [UNITA leader Jonas] Savimbi in the south to increase pressure on the MPLA."¹⁷¹

By October 1975, some 5,000 South Africans were fighting alongside UNITA and FNLA troops inside Angola. Sparks went on to outline the details of a secret press briefing at the time in which South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha stated that South Africa had been urged at the highest levels by "other parties" in the conflict to keep a low profile because they could not be seen associating with South Africa in a military operation of this type. Sparks explained why the South African Government publicly denied its policy, "The real reason, of course, was that the CIA operation was itself clandestine."¹⁷²

In early October additional Cuban advisors, followed by Cuban combat troops, began arriving in Angola to support the MPLA.¹⁷³ Thus, throughout the summer and fall of 1975, the Angolan Civil War had taken on international dimensions with involvement from countries in Central and Southern Africa as well as the superpowers and their client states. Gillian Gunn described what he called a "self-reinforcing cycle of intervention" in Angola. The conflict grew as the superpowers became involved, leading to increased participation by other

¹⁷¹ Sparks, The Mind of South Africa, 304.

¹⁷² Ibid., 306. For additional background on U.S. collusion with the South Africans see Jackson, From the Congo to Soweto, 70.

¹⁷³ U.S. Department of State, Background Notes: Angola (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1987), 4.

countries that were associated one great power or the other. Without the client state involvement, the scale of warfare and the extent of the Angolan Civil War probably would have been much less than turned out to be the case.¹⁷⁴

The decision by UNITA and the United States to seek assistance from South Africa had several significant consequences. South African involvement prompted a substantial increase in the flow of Soviet military equipment and weapons into Angola. In addition, Cuba increased the number of combat troops deployed to Angola. Most importantly, because the United States was supporting the same factions as the South Africans, Washington became the subject of harsh criticism from the international community. Furthermore, a number of African countries that had previously supported the FNLA and UNITA, including Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana and Sudan, switched their support to the MPLA.¹⁷⁵

In a formal toast at a dinner in New York on September 23, 1975, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger outlined the current U.S. foreign policy goals toward Africa. First, that Africa attain prosperity and become a strong economic partner in the global economy. Second, that self-determination, human rights and racial justice spread throughout all of the continent. Third, "... that the continent be free of great-power rivalry or

¹⁷⁴ Gunn, "The Legacy of Angola," 50.

¹⁷⁵ U.S. Department of the Army, Angola: A Country Study, Area Handbook Series, 3d ed. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1991), 40 and Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, 213.

conflict. The United States seeks neither military allies nor ideological confrontation in Africa."¹⁷⁶ In reality Kissinger continued to see Angola in Cold War terms. The East-West conflict remained his top priority.

During October and early November 1975 forces from the FNLA, UNITA and South Africa rapidly regained five provincial capitals, the rail center of Benguela and the port of Lobito. By the actual day of Angolan independence on November 11, the MPLA only controlled the capital of Luanda and a narrow belt of territory across north-central Angola. The Soviet response was to airlift additional military aid in to the MPLA, including heavy artillery and rocket launchers. Cuban army units began manning the more complicated Soviet systems on behalf of the MPLA.¹⁷⁷

During this same period the CIA had become heavily involved in a covert operation inside of Angola. On November 6 the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a closed door session in which the Director of the CIA, William Colby and the State Department's Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Joseph Sisco, briefed the committee on IAFEATURE, which was the CIA code name for the covert operation in Angola. The operation had been providing weapons, equipment and logistical support to the factions fighting the MPLA for the previous five months.

¹⁷⁶ U.S. Department of State, "The United States and Africa: Strengthening the Relationship," Bulletin, 73 (13 October 1975): 572.

Funding to Angolan factions had begun eleven months previously with the first grant going to the FNLA in January 1975.¹⁷⁸ This significant meeting, and growing congressional opposition resulting from it, led the U.S. House and Senate to ban all direct and indirect military and para-military aid to Angola.

The covert operation was put into action by the CIA with approval from the 40 Committee of the National Security Council. The subject of covert action is important because in this instance it failed to remain covert for very long, and the exposure of the operation played a significant role in shaping American public opinion and policy at a critical time when U.S. policymakers were seeking additional funds.

On November 10, at a news conference, Henry Kissinger stated that the involvement of the Soviet Union and Cuba in Angola was a serious matter and that their actions were not compatible with the spirit of détente. He went on to say that the main American interests in Angola were generated by the intervention of other countries. He also declared that the U.S. "... has no other interest except the territorial integrity and independence of Angola."¹⁷⁹ Kissinger's altruistic statements masked the fact that he remained focused solely on the potential

¹⁷⁷ U.S. Department of State, "A Brief Chronicle of Events in Angola," The National Security Archive: South Africa, Document 00549, 4.

¹⁷⁸ Daniel Spikes, Angola and the Politics of Intervention: From Local Bush War to Chronic Crisis in Southern Africa, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1993), 257.

¹⁷⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Kissinger's News Conference of November 10," Bulletin, 73 (1 December 1975): 777-778.

threat of the Soviet Union when considering American policy towards Angola.

Not surprisingly, the day of official Angolan independence on November 11, 1975 saw the country in a state of total chaos, without a functioning government. The Portuguese consequently refused to recognize any of the three factions; instead it ceded independence to "the people of Angola." On that basis, the MPLA established its own government in Luanda and called the territory that it controlled the "People's Republic of Angola." Shortly thereafter, the FNLA and UNITA declared the creation of a rival government in the southern part of Angola.¹⁸⁰ The MPLA was in the best position of the three factions to claim sovereignty since it controlled the capital. Nigeria, and other African nations, soon recognized the MPLA government. By the end of the year the Organization of African Unity had recognized the MPLA government and by the end of February 1976 even the Portuguese had recognized the MPLA.¹⁸¹ The United States stood virtually alone in not recognizing the MPLA government until 1992, when it finally did so.

On November 24, in a major foreign policy speech in Detroit, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger declared that the Soviet build-up in Angola was responsible for bringing "great-power rivalry" into Africa for the first time in 15 years. In an attempt to justify the American policy that he had crafted,

¹⁸⁰ U.S. Department of the Army, Angola: A Country Study, 40.

¹⁸¹ Laidi, The Superpowers in Africa, 69.

Kissinger also stated that the United States could not stand idly by as the Soviet Union continued its interventionist policy in Africa. He urged the Soviets to follow a policy of restraint so as to not upset détente.¹⁸² Several days later in response to a question during a press conference, Kissinger elaborated, "... the United States cannot be indifferent to what is going on, but the United States will not intervene militarily in Angola."¹⁸³ By that time the Kissinger-approved U.S. covert action in Angola had been active for several months, since the previous summer.

An article in Jeune Afrique on December 12 described the events in Angola as having changed from those of a localized civil war into a full scale battleground between the superpowers. The magazine alleged that the heavy weapons supplied by the Soviets had dramatically altered the balance of power in favor of the MPLA, a circumstance which most likely would incite Washington to increase its military assistance to the FLNA and UNITA. The MPLA responded to Secretary Kissinger's Detroit speech by stating that they were being threatened by the "forces of imperialism."¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, the fact that South Africa had now become a full-fledged participant in a conflict outside of its borders, raised serious concerns in the international community. Allister Sparks described the ultimate outcome of the South African intervention into Angola:

¹⁸² U.S. Department of State, "Building an Enduring Foreign Policy," Bulletin, 73 (15 December 1975): 843.

¹⁸³ U.S. Department of State, "Secretary's News Conference of November 28," Bulletin, 73 (22 December 1975): 897.

The venture soon ran into disaster and was exposed. The operation was scrapped and the South Africans, left out on a limb five hundred miles inside of Angola, had no choice but to quit and withdraw in a flurry of embarrassment and diplomatic recriminations while the MPLA took over in Luanda.¹⁸⁵

It was in this charged atmosphere that the State Department, in a memorandum to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, dated December 16, outlined several U.S. policy objectives. The first was to ensure that the FNLA and UNITA survived in spite of heavy pressure from the MPLA. The second was the use of a political settlement to resolve the crisis.¹⁸⁶ Any political settlement in the State Department's view would involve the Organization of African Unity and superpower cooperation with the Soviet Union in ending the civil war. The State Department continued to stress that the only way a diplomatic initiative would work was for the United States to continue supporting the FNLA and UNITA; otherwise, the argument went, the Soviets and Cubans would conclude that they could gain a quick military victory without having to negotiate.¹⁸⁷ Following the policy outlined in the above memorandum, Henry

¹⁸⁴ "Les Encouragements à l'Aggression Sud-Africaine," Jeune Afrique, 12 December 1975, 28.

¹⁸⁵ Sparks, The Mind of South Africa, 306.

¹⁸⁶ The second stated objective is interesting to note since Secretary of State Kissinger had rejected a diplomatic solution the previous Summer and remained uncommitted to any change in his policy.

¹⁸⁷ U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Policy Toward Angola," 16 December 1975, South Africa and the United States: The Declassified History, A National Security Archive Documents Reader, (New York: New Press, 1993), Document 37, 224.

Kissinger asked Congress for an additional \$28 million for the covert operation in Angola.

In spite of the desires of Henry Kissinger and the National Security Council, Congress, after much debate, voted in December 1975 and January 1976 to cease all aid to Angola. The law immediately came to be known as the "Clark Amendment," after its sponsor, Senator Dick Clark (D-Iowa). The so-called Clark Amendment had a significant influence on U.S. policy at the time. On December 19, President Ford issued a statement condemning the Senate action that prohibited American assistance to Angola as a "deep tragedy." The President said that the ban would nullify the ability of the United States to solve the Angolan situation during the very time that the Soviets and Cubans were operating without any such constraint in supporting the MPLA in Angola. He called upon the Senate to reverse its position.¹⁸⁸

One of the bitter ironies of the Angolan Civil War lies in the fact that an American oil company, the Gulf Oil Corporation continued to pay the MPLA government for oil production from Angola throughout this entire period. American oil companies had acquired almost complete control of oil production in Angola's Cabinda province in the north of the country, after 1971. The Gulf Oil Company had invested more than \$300 million

¹⁸⁸ U.S. National Archives and Record Administration, "Remarks on Senate Action to Prohibit United States Assistance to Angola, 19 December 1975," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Gerald R. Ford, 1975, Book 2, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1977), 1981.

by 1975 and was pumping over 150,000 barrels of oil a day.¹⁸⁹ "Running at a total of \$500 million a year," wrote David Binder in the New York Times," the Gulf payments [to the MPLA] are almost 10 times what the C.I.A. has been empowered to send to the Angola factions it supports."¹⁹⁰ The fact that the Angolan faction that the U.S. opposed was being bankrolled by a large American multinational corporation with a large financial stake in Angola was described by Senator Clark as "unique"¹⁹¹ in the history of American foreign policy. In a sense it was arguable that the United States was funding both sides in the Angolan conflict during the 1970s.¹⁹²

During his congressional testimony in the Angola hearings, Secretary Kissinger asserted that the U.S. principles for a solution to the Angola situation throughout the period were "unambiguous and straightforward." The principles he laid out were as follows: Angola was an African problem that should be left to Africans to solve; foreign military intervention only prolonged warfare; OAU efforts for a cease-fire ought to be supported; the U.S. had no unilateral interests in Angola except

¹⁸⁹ Jackson, From the Congo to Soweto, 59.

¹⁹⁰ David Binder, "Gulf Undecided on Continuing Oil Payments to Angola," New York Times, 21 December 1975, 2.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² This was not the first time that American interests were essentially at odds with itself in Angola. Beginning in the 1960s the Pentagon stressed the NATO relationship with Portugal and provided assistance to the Portuguese as part of the Alliance. At the same time, the CIA was beginning to formulate contacts and provide assistance to the FNLA, and later UNITA, who were fighting against Portuguese colonial rule. Thus, agencies of the U.S. Government acted on both sides of the conflict in its early stages.

the desire to see the people of Angola live in peace; and Angola should be insulated from great power conflict.¹⁹³ A State Department booklet dated January 1976, the same month as the congressional hearings, further elaborated on official U.S. policy regarding Africa. The booklet said:

America has many ties to Africa and a deep commitment to its future. Strengthening the relationship between the United States and Africa is a major objective of American policy. Traditionally we have been dedicated to independence, self-determination, and individual rights.¹⁹⁴

This optimistic assessment of the situation avoided several truths. The fact was the single-minded determination of Henry Kissinger to stop the Soviets. The second was the fact that the Angolan Civil War was raging on as Senator Clark had predicted, costing thousands of lives and causing mass destruction. By the end of 1975, the United States had spent millions of dollars in a failed attempt to fight a cheap war, in a region of arguably minimal strategic importance, in the attempt to stop communist expansion.

In early January 1976 Africa Confidential reported that the only real chance for a solution in Angola had to come from Washington and Moscow. The article stated that the MPLA was gaining a military advantage and was considered as likely to win

¹⁹³ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs, "Statement by Henry Kissinger," Angola, 10.

¹⁹⁴ U.S. Department of State, United States Foreign Policy: An Overview, Washington, D.C.: GPO, January 1976.

the civil war, largely because support from the Soviet Union and Cuba was more supportive than American aid to the FNLA and UNITA. The same article accurately predicted that Zaire would remain firmly committed in the fight against the MPLA in order to protect its economic and political interests, and that the presence of the South Africans in Angola would remain controversial.¹⁹⁵

In early 1976 the Ford administration assumed a more passive position regarding Angola. The congressional ban on aid to Angola, along with public regulation of and indignation over the American covert operation in Angola turned American foreign policy into that of an "interested spectator."¹⁹⁶ At a crucial time for the American policy, because the CIA covert operation was running out of money and needed immediate funding from Congress, which would have ran contrary to the recent congressional ban, Secretary of State Kissinger visited the Soviet Union January 20-22, 1976. During his meetings there the shadow of Angola as well as the promise of détente hung in the air. However, during Secretary Kissinger's visit Soviet Premier Brezhnev refused to discuss the Angolan situation, and Kissinger left the meetings stating that the Soviet Union was continuing its "expansionist" policies in Africa, and that consequently

¹⁹⁵ "An Ominous New Year," Africa Confidential, 9 January 1975, 1.

¹⁹⁶ Mark Owen Lombardi, "Superpower Intervention in Sub-Saharan Africa," 141.

American allies should continue to provide aid to the FNLA and UNITA.¹⁹⁷

By the end of January 1976, due to the collapsing military situation brought about by increased Cuban and Soviet involvement in the conflict, President Mobutu withdrew all of the Zairian forces that had been fighting alongside the FNLA in northern Angola. At the same time, South African forces in Southern Angola began pulling back towards the Namibian border.¹⁹⁸ Partly as a consequence of Mobutu's action, the FNLA began to disintegrate, and soon was finished as an effective fighting force. Diplomats in Zaire, which had been the FNLA's closest ally since the 1960s, acknowledged that the FNLA was no longer a threat to the combined Cuban and MPLA forces. Zaire became increasingly concerned about the security of its borders as MPLA troops made continued advances in northern Angola during the new year. By this time the Cubans had at least 9,500 soldiers in Angola, with more on the way.¹⁹⁹

Back in the United States, the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Arther A. Hartman, gave a speech in Houston on March 4 in which he discussed relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. He said that the Soviets had provided \$200 million in military support to the MPLA during the previous year. That amount, he claimed, exceeded the total of

¹⁹⁷ Paul Bernetel, "Angola: la Guerre est-elle Finie?," Jeune Afrique, 13 February 1976, 14-16.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Henry Kamm, "Angolan Denies Group Is Near Collapse," New York Times, 17 January 1976, 2.

all military equipment supplied by all other countries to all of sub-Saharan Africa during that same year. Hartman expressed disappointment at the Ford administration's failure to win congressional support for its Angola policy, and tried to explain American involvement in Angola in the following way:

"We felt we had to respond [to the Soviets and Cubans], and we wanted to do so where it would have the most effect on the ground, ... we must make clear to them [the Soviets] that actions speak louder than words"²⁰⁰ President Ford reemphasized many of Hartman's themes had during a question and answer session with reporters on March 27. Ford reiterated that the congressional ban was, "... a serious mistake with broad ramifications for the future."²⁰¹

By the end of March 1976 the South Africans had completed their withdrawal from Angola, and the MPLA had established control over most of the country. By that time the Cubans had about 12,000 troops in Angola. What remained of the FNLA reverted to conducting guerrilla warfare in the north while their leader, Holden Roberto, went into permanent exile in Europe. UNITA retreated, at the same time, to the southwestern corner of Angola where it continued to carry out low-level guerrilla operations.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, "The United States and the Soviet Union," Bulletin, 74 (5 April 1976): 439.

²⁰¹ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session in LaCrosse, March 27, 1976," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Gerald R. Ford, 1976, Book 1 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1979), 841.

²⁰² U.S. Department of State, Background Notes: Angola, 4.

1985-1987 THE ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR REVISITED

The Reagan administration (1981-1989) entered office with an African foreign policy that stressed anti-communist rhetoric and exhibited minimal attention towards indigenous African issues. The American policy towards Angola in the mid-1980s was formulated at a time of increased action on the part of the Reagan administration to stop the perceived spread of communism anywhere in the world. David Nhlabatsi, in his Master's Thesis "Making Friends With Apartheid," stated that the Reagan administration was intent on renewed competition with the Soviet Union and that the containment of Soviet expansion was at the top of Reagan's foreign policy agenda.²⁰³ The policy of "Constructive Engagement," which had actually been initiated during the Nixon administration, was put forward with renewed vigor. Cooperating with the white minority government in South Africa to end apartheid and deterring Soviet expansion were major tenets of that policy. Constructive Engagement worked from the premise that the minority government in South Africa must be encouraged to change the apartheid system, and that only close cooperation with that government would foster internal reform and act as a deterrent to the spread of communism in Southern Africa.

In an article that appeared in the Winter 1980-81 edition of Foreign Affairs, Chester Crocker, who was destined to become Reagan's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs,

²⁰³ Nhlabtsi, "Making Friends With Apartheid," 22.

outlined the key principles of what became known as Constructive Engagement. Crocker saw economic growth in South Africa as a major force in promoting change. He felt that Washington should promote change by working with the white South African establishment and that cooperation with the strongly anticommunist Botha government would stop any possible spread of communism in Southern Africa.²⁰⁴ Michael Clough wrote that when Crocker "... first officially outlined the rationale for Constructive Engagement, he did so in explicitly geopolitical terms."²⁰⁵

From 1976 until the mid-1980s the conflict in Angola continued unabated. While the FNLA faction had ceased to function as an organized entity against the MPLA, UNITA on the other hand continued to fight, from its bases in Southern Angola, against the MPLA led government located in the capital of Luanda. Because of the Clark Amendment, which banned all American support to Angola, the United States was not actively involved in open support of any faction in the fighting. But UNITA continued to receive military assistance from South Africa; and after President Reagan took office in 1981 he announced that he would renew covert support for UNITA in its

²⁰⁴ Chester A. Crocker, "South Africa: Strategy for Change," Foreign Affairs, 59 (Winter 1980/81): 323-351. See also, Chester A. Crocker, High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992). For a critical review see Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, 220-246.

²⁰⁵ Clough, Free at Last?, 103.

bid to overthrow the Marxist government of Angola.²⁰⁶ Angola thus became a country that Assistant Secretary Crocker used as an important example of Constructive Engagement at work, because both the United States and South Africa shared the same strategic concerns in Southern Africa, especially with regard to containing communism.²⁰⁷

In May 1978 the South Africans initiated a series of raids into Angola which lasted until the mid-1980s. The purpose of these incursions was to destroy bases belonging to the nationalist South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), whose troops were operating in Southern Angola with the approval of the MPLA government in Luanda. SWAPO was engaged in waging a war of independence across the border in Namibia (South West Africa) against the South Africans, who acquired sovereignty over the territory under an old League of Nations mandate. SWAPO was a movement established to gain independence from South Africa. It fought a protracted guerrilla war against Pretoria's control of Namibia. The South African SWAPO raids were often beneficial to UNITA, because Pretoria also opposed the MPLA. Consequently, South African military operations inside Angola were often carried out in close coordination between South Africa and UNITA.²⁰⁸

In December 1983 and January 1984 the South African raids into Angola reached a new intensity. In early 1984 the South

²⁰⁶ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Towards Africa, 220.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 222.

Africans launched Operation Askari into Southern Angola. After difficult fighting, the South Africans gained control of large portions of Southern Angola. It was during negotiations between South Africa and Angola regarding disengagement when the notion of "linkage" was brought up on the bargaining table. "Linkage" specified that South Africa would withdraw from Angola if SWAPO and the Cubans would withdraw from Angola. Later negotiations led to the first formal understanding that South Africa would grant independence to Namibia provided that the Cubans simultaneously left Angola. Assistant Secretary Crocker optimistically summed up the results of the negotiations:

... by early 1985, we had made real progress in devising and gaining acceptance for a framework for resolving the dual question of Namibian independence and Cuban troop presence in Angola.²⁰⁹

The President of Angola, Eduardo Dos Santos, refused to agree to the proposal because he did not want to lose the security that the Cuban troops brought to his regime, but both the South Africans and the Cubans pulled back anyway.²¹⁰ Finally, as a result of the negotiations, the South Africans withdrew from their positions inside of Angola in return for "restraint" by SWAPO, which continued guerrilla its guerrilla activity by crossing from Angola into Namibia. By the end of 1985, the MPLA

²⁰⁸ U.S. Department of the Army, Angola: A Country Study, 244-245.

²⁰⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Statement by Honorable Chester A. Crocker Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Angola," The National Security Archive: South Africa, Document 02011, 3.

government in Angola had agreed to withdraw 20,000 Cuban troops over three years upon the implementation of United Nations Resolution 435, which was the independence plan for Namibia.²¹¹

In a speech in April 1985 Secretary of State George Schultz provided some background to the events in Angola from the American policy perspective. He said that there were about 30,000 Cuban troops in Angola, in addition to Soviet and East German advisors. Soviet aid to Angola Schultz claimed, was almost exclusively military in nature. In a statement reminiscent of policymakers during the Congo crisis, Secretary Schultz said, "Our adversaries have no constructive stake in the region, seeing, rather, in instability their best chance to expand their influence."²¹² Any time the Soviets and the Cubans intervene in a part of the world that is far from their borders," Schultz added, "the U.S. needs to pay attention. Intervention such as this threatens Africa and the global balance. The peoples of Africa," he concluded, "deserve better than the bankruptcy - economic, political, and moral - of the Soviet model."²¹³ The Cubans and Soviets had already been in

²¹⁰ Spikes, Angola and the Politics of Intervention, 321.

²¹¹ United Nations Resolution 435 was the blueprint for the independence of Namibia. Assistant Secretary Crocker directly linked the withdrawal of Cuban troops in Angola to Washington's support of the independence process outlined in Resolution 435. See Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, 220-222. For an overview of American policy regarding Namibian independence during the 1980s see Nhlabatsi, "Making Friends With Apartheid," Chapter 2.

²¹² U.S. Department of State, "Address by the Secretary of State Before the National Press Club, April 16, 1985," Bulletin, 85 (June 1985): 22.

²¹³ Ibid.

Angola for a decade, but under the Reagan administration policy of "rolling back" communism, the presence of the Cubans and Soviets was unacceptable.

In August 1985 the MPLA launched a major offensive against UNITA's main bases in the southeastern corner of Angola. Along with the MPLA forces, there were an estimated 31,000 Cuban soldiers and Soviet advisors in Angola. The MPLA offensive led to a level of combat that had not been seen since the 1975-1976 civil war. UNITA's base at Mavinga was saved only by the intervention of the South Africans. As the Angolan war began reaching unprecedented levels of intensity, the United States Congress, now under the influence of a popular Reagan administration, repealed the Clark Amendment which had restricted aid to Angola. President Reagan immediately authorized \$15 million in military aid for UNITA.²¹⁴

In September 1985, the State Department optimistically reported that the United States was in an active dialogue with the countries of the region to replace violence with negotiations.²¹⁵ The press release went on to state that "... the United States remains committed to a process of negotiation to resolve Southern Africa's problems." Later in the same text the press release stated:

... we have made significant progress largely because

²¹⁴ Spikes, Angola and the Politics of Intervention, 321-322.

²¹⁵ As an example, the press release cited the Lusaka Accord, which however, was never successfully completed, because the South Africans returned to Angola within less than a year after agreeing to it.

the US is the only mediator enjoying credibility with all the regional governments and guerrilla movements. The US has seized the strategic initiative from the Soviets and their allies ...²¹⁶

The press release was more than a little intriguing when one considers the fact that the United States had definite favorites among the governments in Southern Africa, and that the Reagan administration was on the verge of providing millions of dollars in covert aid to UNITA in a bid to "balance the scales" according to what Washington wanted in the region. By strengthening the bargaining position of UNITA's leader Jonas Savimbi, American policymakers hoped to force the MPLA to broker a deal on terms more favorable to UNITA. The press statement again optimistically portrayed President Reagan's foreign policy as an altruistic effort to bring peace to a troubled region. The State Department portrayed Reagan as a President wanting peace, but on his own terms, as viewed from his particular perspective of the Cold War.

The new funding for UNITA heralded in a period of vocal public support for Jonas Savimbi from the Reagan administration. Savimbi was hailed as a freedom fighter who was courageous enough to stand up to Soviet intervention in Angola. On November 4, 1985, the State Department sent a cable with guidance for its missions abroad on dealing with the press regarding Angola and UNITA. The cable stated that the U.S.

²¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, GIST: Southern Africa: US Policy (Washington, D.C., September 1985), 2.

supported UNITA as a positive example of a movement "inspired to resist outside intervention." The cable stated: "... UNITA's resistance to the Soviet aggression is a case in point ... we want to be supportive of UNITA."²¹⁷ Later that same month, Secretary of State Schultz reiterated the same point when he remarked, "... we support the freedom fighting of Jonas Savimbi and UNITA."²¹⁸

At the end of January 1986 Jonas Savimbi made a private visit to the United States where he met with President Reagan at the White House. A senior administration official described the meeting as "... a very positive exchange between the two men."²¹⁹ A week later President Reagan lauded Savimbi and UNITA in the following manner:

We are moved by the efforts of freedom fighters such as Jonas Savimbi and the members of UNITA. They deserve our support in their brave struggle against Soviet-Cuban imperialism in Angola.²²⁰

Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary Crocker promoted the positive image of UNITA while he was urging Congress to support the administration's policy in Angola during his testimony to the

²¹⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Press Guidance on Angola/U.S. Policy/Aid to UNITA," The National Security Archive: South Africa, Document 01949, 1.

²¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Secretary's Interview on 'Meet the Press,' November 24, 1985," Bulletin, 86 (January 1986): 20.

²¹⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Visit of Dr. Jonas Savimbi, January 30, 1986," American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1986 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1987), Document 377, 623.

²²⁰ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Message to the Congress on America's Agenda for the Future, 6 February 1986," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1986, Book 1 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1988), 161.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 18. Crocker said:

... keeping in mind the words of Dr. Savimbi when he visited here, I think it important that our government, both the executive and legislative branches, make clear that we support those who fight for freedom and political solutions.²²¹

On February 10, 1986, President Reagan issued a National Security Directive which stated that the Soviet Union and Cuba were posing a direct challenge to U.S. national interests, and that in light of the lifting of the Clark amendment a new policy was warranted. American objectives included reducing and, if possible, eliminating Soviet influence in Angola. The Directive stated that the U.S. would remain actively involved in Southern Africa. Pressure was to be put on the MPLA to withdraw the Cuban troops from Angola and to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. American government contacts with UNITA were to be expanded and encouraged.²²²

But by mid-1985, as these events were being played out, the Reagan policy of Constructive Engagement was running into serious trouble elsewhere as the public outcry against the white minority South African government increased. Protests had

²²¹ U.S. Department of State, "Statement by Honorable Chester A. Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Angola," The National Security Archive: South Africa, Document 02011, 10.

²²² U.S. President, "United States Policy Toward Angola, National Security Directive 212, February 10, 1986," in Christopher Simpson, National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 660.

become commonplace in front of the South African embassy in Washington as thousands of people, including numerous celebrities, politicians, and sports figures, were arrested protesting the apartheid government. Public outcry grew as seen by the increase in demonstrations and marches in places like college campuses around the country. In response to the public expression of concern, American companies and public institutions rushed to divest their organizations of investments in South Africa and to distance themselves from the apartheid regime.

In response, the Reagan administration fought desperately to avoid any type of congressional limitations on its policies and to avoid American sanctions against South Africa. Finally, in October 1986, Congress overrode a Presidential veto and enacted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986.²²³ In spite of the desires of the Reagan administration, the Act became a watershed event in American relations with South Africa and served the role of driving home an American nail in the coffin of apartheid. These events were important because they set the tone for American policy toward the rest of Africa during the mid-1980s. Angola and other regions saw decreased attention from the Reagan administration as it dealt with the increasing tenuous situation in South Africa and struggled to retain credibility on other Africa-related issues.

²²³ Clough, Free at Last?, 105.

In a speech on July 22, 1986, President Reagan reiterated many of the same policy objectives that he had earlier emphasized regarding his policies toward Southern Africa. He stated that American national ideals and strategic interests came together in Southern Africa. Strategically, he said, Southern Africa was one of the most vital regions in the world to U.S. interests. He went on to say:

A decade ago, using an army of Cuban mercenaries provided by Fidel Castro, Moscow installed a client regime in Angola. Today the Soviet Union is providing that regime with the weapons to attack UNITA, a black liberation movement ...²²⁴

President Reagan refused to see the Angolan situation as anything other than another example of East-West conflict that challenged the position of the United States.

Finally, on July 20, 1988 Angola, Cuba, and South Africa announced that they had agreed to a plan, largely brokered by Assistant Secretary Chester Crocker, that would lead to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola in exchange for South Africa's granting independence to Namibia and ceasing all support for UNITA. The agreement was formalized on December 20, 1988. Six months later the Eastern Bloc would begin its

²²⁴ U.S. National Archives and Record Administration, "Remarks to Members of the World Affairs Council and the Foreign Policy Association, July 22, 1986" Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1986, Book 2 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1989), 986.

disintegration leading to its ultimate collapse.²²⁵ By the end of 1989 the Berlin wall had fallen and the Cold War was ending.

CONCLUSION

Before concluding this chapter it is important to mention briefly the role of President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, who will also be addressed in greater detail in the following chapter in the events described. Mobutu enjoyed what many analysts considered to be a "special relationship" with the United States that began before Mobutu's first coup in 1960 and continued throughout the Cold War. That bilateral relationship had also been a mainstay of United States policy in Central Africa ever since Mobutu had first come permanently into power in 1965. To understand the relationship with Mobutu is to understand a great deal of the reason why the U.S. followed the policies that it did, both officially and unofficially, during the thirty year period of the Cold War in Central Africa.

In 1989, almost thirty years after Congolese independence and as the Cold War drew to a close, President George Bush described Zaire in the following manner: "Zaire is among America's oldest friends, and its President, President Mobutu, one of our most valued friends on the entire continent of Africa."²²⁶ Few other countries in the region saw the level of

²²⁵ Spikes, Angola and the Politics of Intervention, 322.

²²⁶ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Remarks Following Discussions With President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, June 29, 1989," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1989 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1990), 822.

official interest in Washington that Zaire maintained over those years. The State Department Background Notes on Zaire also emphasized the unique position that Zaire enjoyed in Washington: "Zaire has played a significant role in African and East-West politics since independence, as befits its size and strategic location in the heart of the continent."²²⁷ The same document described the relationship between the United States and Zaire as follows:

Relations between Zaire and the United States have been close since Zaire's independence. The two countries share an interest in promoting economic growth, stability, and peaceful political development in Central Africa.²²⁸

That correct description masks the fact that the United States had become involved with Mobutu for a number of inter-related reasons during the height of the Cold War. Essentially the Americans needed a pro-Western strong man whom they could exert hegemony in that rich and strategic region in the heart of Africa. With an ally like Mobutu in power, Washington was reassured that it could move on to other important regions of the world without having to forever look back over its shoulder. In the sub-title of his book America's Tyrant, Sean Kelly aptly summarizes the changes in the American relationship with Mobutu in this way, "How the United States Put Mobutu in Power,

²²⁷ U.S. Department of State, Background Notes: Zaire (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1988), 7.

²²⁸ Ibid., 8.

Protected Him from His Enemies, Helped Him become One of the Richest Men in the World and Lived to Regret it."²²⁹

Each of the four time periods highlighted in this chapter has served to emphasize American foreign policy towards Central Africa at a time when there was also increased activity by the CIA. Each of these examples showed major milestones in U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War in Central Africa by displaying the official American position as events occurred. During each period, the CIA was to play a quiet, behind the scenes role that took place outside of the realm of public debate. The actions of the CIA and how those actions related to American government policy during the same four periods are the subject of the next chapter.

Throughout the Cold War the United States government used the threat of communist aggression to justify actions that it wanted to take. Publicly, containment remained the overriding factor regarding American foreign policy toward Central Africa. Nonetheless, it must be said that the U.S. often acted without a complete understanding of the actual situation in the region. In addition, Washington often had multiple interests and motives at work when foreign policy decisions were being made. Another trend was that American policymakers often said one thing publicly and then proceeded to do another when implementing policy. That included their utilization of the CIA as an extension of American diplomacy.

²²⁹ Kelly, America's Tyrant, iii.

This chapter has shown that the CIA often had the upper hand in information coming from Central Africa. The Agency had better resources to collect and gather information about events that occurred in the region. This advantage, over other governmental agencies, gave the Agency the ability to control and even to shape events, simply because it had more assets to find out what was happening and then to take the action it desired. This was especially true in the early Congo Crisis when the CIA had a virtual monopoly on information going to Washington. The old axiom "knowledge is power" consistently played out as an advantage for the Agency in Central Africa. Partially due to this advantage, the Agency became the most informed and thus the most active in the region.

During the Cold War American foreign policy constituted the framework within which the CIA operated in Central Africa. Official foreign policy often afforded the CIA cover, so that it was able to function in Central Africa without having to report what it was doing. The policy of using the Agency as a policy tool was acceptable so long as the Agency supported the vague, continuous goal of stopping the spread of communism. Everything the CIA did in the Congo for more than a generation after 1960: influencing domestic affairs during the turbulent years in 1960-61; helping its pro-Western ally, Colonel Mobutu, come to power in 1965; arming and advising Angolan civil-war factions during 1975-76 and again during 1985-86 were done by the CIA under the

rubric of "official" foreign policy. The details of what the CIA did in Central Africa is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

CIA ACTIVITIES IN CENTRAL AFRICA

Chapter III the actions of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for the same period selected to review the American foreign policy towards Central Africa. It will focus on the periods when the CIA was particularly active in Central Africa: the early Congo Crisis in 1960-1961; Mobutu's coup in the Congo in 1965; the Angola civil war of 1975-1976; and the Reagan administration involvement in Angola in 1985-1987. Each period corresponds to a specific event, or set of events, in which the CIA effectively acted as an extension of American foreign policy. Using the U.S. foreign policy outlined in the previous chapter as a foundation, I will review the actions of the CIA in relation to the U.S. policy that was in effect during each event. As background to the history of the CIA in Central Africa, a few of the basics regarding the CIA are presented, including its past and how it operates today.

Whether or not the CIA followed official procedures in the conduct of its activity in Central Africa and what the final result of that activity was, are discussed in this chapter. Rene Lemarchand, a noted African scholar, stated in "The CIA in Africa" (1978), "... it is important to understand the effects

that CIA activities have had on U.S. foreign policy."¹ By understanding the role of the CIA one gains a deeper insight into the events of the time and the reasons why American officials made certain policy decisions during that period. Chapter III shows that the CIA was a dominant factor in United States foreign policy in Central Africa during each respective time.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CIA

It is important to have a brief understanding of the Agency. "The CIA was conceived and established to provide high-quality intelligence to senior policymakers."² The vision, mission, value statement and credo of the CIA are listed in Appendix B. The roots of the CIA can be traced to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) which functioned during World War II as the central U.S. intelligence organization. After the war ended the OSS was disbanded, and its responsibilities were divided between the State Department and the War Department. Following the war, President Truman created the National Intelligence Authority to process intelligence reports from various government agencies. The operating element of the National

¹ Rene Lemarchand, "The CIA in Africa, How Central? How Intelligent?" in his American Policy in Southern Africa: The Stakes and the Stance (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978), 344.

² U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, Final Report: Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Foreign and Military Intelligence, Book 4, 94th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975), 91.

Intelligence authority was designated the Central Intelligence Group, and it coordinated and collated incoming intelligence for the President. The Central Intelligence Group had limited responsibility for intelligence collection.³

In 1947 the Central Intelligence Agency was created, as a part of the National Security Act of 1947, to replace the Central Intelligence Group. The Act established the CIA as an independent agency within the executive branch.⁴ The new agency fell under the National Security Council (NSC) which functioned as a body of advisors to the President and was headed by the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI).⁵ According to the National Defense Act of 1947, the original mission statement for the CIA was straightforward: the Agency was established "For the purpose of coordinating the intelligence activities of the several Government Agencies in the interest of national security ..."⁶

The National Security Act of 1947 stipulated the specific duties to be performed by the CIA. The Agency was to advise the NSC on intelligence-related matters, make recommendations on the

³ Jeffery T. Richelson, The U.S. Intelligence Community, (Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing, 1985), 20.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Later, the structure of the NSC changed and the DCI became an advisory member. The statutory members of the NSC are the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense. The DCI and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff participate as advisors.

⁶ The National Security Act of 1947, Sec. 102, [50 U.S.C. 403] in U.S. Congress, House, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Compilation of Intelligence Laws and Related Laws and Executive Orders of Interest to the National Intelligence

coordination of intelligence activities, collect and evaluate intelligence, and disseminate as needed. The CIA was expressly forbidden from exercising any type of police power or other domestic legal authority. Other governmental agencies, for example the Defense Department and the State Department, were allowed to continue their own specific intelligence functions which related to their area of concern. The DCI was given the authority to protect intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure.⁷

The last area of responsibility provided for in the National Defense Act of 1947 is crucial to this thesis and is often cited as legal justification for the CIA's authority to conduct covert activities. The section of the Act reads as follows, "... to perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the National Security Council may from time to time direct."⁸ The provisions of the Act of 1947 allowed a broad interpretation to the extent of leeway given to the CIA to conduct covert activity.

Thomas F. Troy, in his history of the origins of the CIA that was published by the CIA for its own employees' use as a source of background information about the Agency, described the intentions of the authors of the 1947 Act regarding any possible future covert activity:

Community, 98th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1983),

6.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

It is quite likely true that on July 26, 1947, when he [President Truman] signed the act, he had no thought of the new agency conducting subversive operations against foreign governments. As far as evidence goes, no one did.⁹

Troy went on to explain the result of the broad interpretation in the "other functions and duties" clause of the Act of 1947. Troy felt that "The language of the provision clearly left room for contingency and necessity, and the new CIA ... proved an apt instrument for the conduct of covert operations when the situation invited them."¹⁰ Jeffrey Richelson, in The U.S. Intelligence Community (1981), had his own explanation of the widely debated clause which explained the long term influence of the Act of 1947 as the legal justification for CIA covert activity:

Whatever the intentions of Congress in 1947, the CIA developed in accord with a maximalist interpretation of the Act. Thus, the CIA has become the primary U.S. governmental agency for intelligence analysis, clandestine human intelligence collection and covert action.¹¹

The CIA over the years was to use the vagueness of the National Security Act of 1947 as justification to conduct numerous covert actions in the name of "national security."

Two years later, the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 further strengthened and clarified the role of the DCI as

⁹ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Thomas F. Troy, Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1981), 413.

¹⁰ Ibid., 415.

¹¹ Richelson, The U.S. Intelligence Community, 21.

the central coordinator of intelligence within and on behalf of the U.S. government. This Act enhanced the secretive nature of the CIA and strengthened the Agency's justification for covert activities. The DCI was "excused" from reporting the function, number of personnel and the salaries of those employed by the Agency. The Act ordered the Director of the Budget not to report to Congress allocations for the CIA. The CIA was also authorized to spend its budget in secrecy and was made accountable only to the DCI. The 1949 Act required minimal contact between the CIA and Congress on financial matters in the form of briefings to the Armed Services Committees of Congress.¹²

The Acts of 1947 and 1949 laid the foundation upon which the CIA operated, largely unchallenged, until the mid-1970s when the Agency came under increased public and congressional scrutiny. The post-Watergate and post-Vietnam era allegations against the CIA centered on illegal domestic activities and the on nature and extent of covert activities that had been conducted by the CIA. The investigations led to a series of reforms in the 1970s and 1980s which clarified the function and role of the CIA as well as strengthening the reporting procedures with Congress. However, the recent Aldrich Ames spy scandal (1994), the lack of congressional knowledge regarding the \$300 million cost of the new 1994 National Reconnaissance

¹² Deborah Jean Lancaster, "The Central Intelligence Agency: America's Quest for Intelligence" (Master of Arts thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 1981), 40-41. See also, Central Intelligence Agency Act, 50 U.S.C., sec. 7, 8(b), 1949.

Office (NRO) headquarters, and the 1996 "discovery" of \$2 billion in surplus funds at the NRO demonstrate that there is still much ground to be covered by the CIA in maintaining oversight of the intelligence community and ensuring that all intelligence related operations conducted by the U.S. Government are constitutional.¹³

The CIA is organized with the DCI serving both as the head of the CIA and as the leading official of the governmental intelligence community in general. The DCI is the primary advisor to the President and the National Security Council for all foreign intelligence related matters. He/she has deputy directors who are responsible for different areas of the Agency's responsibilities, two of whom are important to this study. First, the Deputy Director for Intelligence is responsible for the processing, analysis and dissemination of the Agency's intelligence product. For example, many of the CIA intelligence summaries in the previous chapter were prepared by analysts in the Intelligence Directorate. Most notably, the Directorate of Intelligence produces National Intelligence Estimates for key policymakers. The Directorate of Intelligence is further divided into regions. For example, African related issues are handled by the Office of African and Latin American

¹³ For more information on the Aldrich Ames spy scandal, see Tim Weiner, David Johnson and Neil A. Lewis, Betrayal: The Story of Aldrich Ames (New York: Random House, 1995). For more information on the National Reconnaissance Office headquarters and budget see, Tim Weiner, "Senators Angered Over Cost of Spy Agency's New Offices," New York Times, 9 August 1994, sec. A, p.

Analysis. In summary, the Intelligence Directorate is the so-called analytical side of the CIA.¹⁴

The other important director is the Deputy Director for Operations, who is in charge of collecting foreign intelligence through secret means, counterintelligence and "... when directed by the President, other secret foreign intelligence tasks."¹⁵ In other words, the Operations Directorate is the part of the CIA that handles covert operations and other human intelligence or espionage related operations. Together, the Intelligence and Operations Directorates of the CIA have played a major role in shaping the CIA into the organization that it is today.¹⁶

Covert action,¹⁷ the aspect of the CIA most important to this thesis, is expected to be conducted according to a specific set of guidelines. The CIA's Factbook on Intelligence (1991) explained the official procedures that must be followed in order to conduct a covert operation. Only the President can direct the CIA to conduct a covert action based upon the recommendation of the NSC. Once given an assignment, the DCI must notify the

1; and Tim Weiner, "A Secret Agency's Secret Budgets Yield Lost Billions, Officials Say," *ibid.*, 30 January 1996, sec. A, p. 1.

¹⁴ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Factbook on Intelligence (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1991), 9-11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-11. For an interesting discussion of the relationship between the two functions of the CIA, intelligence analysis and covert activity, see William R. Johnson, "Clandestinity and Current Intelligence," in Inside CIA's Private World: Declassified Articles From the Agency's Internal Journal, 1955-1992, ed. H. Bradford Westerfield (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1995), 118-184.

¹⁷ For an interesting discussion on the cases for and against covert action see Lancaster, "The Central Intelligence Agency," 168-176.

intelligence oversight committees in Congress of the details. Covert actions are considered necessary when the NSC determines that:

U.S. foreign policy objectives may not be fully realized by normal diplomatic means and when military action is deemed too extreme an option. Therefore, the Agency may be directed to conduct a special activity abroad in support of foreign policy such that the role of the U.S. Government is neither apparent nor publicly acknowledged.¹⁸

The Final Report of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, known as the Church Committee, which investigated U.S. intelligence activities in 1975 and 1976, defined covert action as, "... the attempt to influence the internal affairs of other nations in support of United States foreign policy in a manner that conceals the participation of the United States Government."¹⁹ The report declared that the CIA had conducted over nine hundred major or sensitive covert action projects, plus several thousand smaller projects, from 1961 to 1976.²⁰

The Pike Committee, which was the U.S. House of Representatives' equivalent to the Senate's Church Committee, defined covert action as "clandestine activity other than purely information-gathering, which is directed at producing a

¹⁸ Ibid., 31.

¹⁹ U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, Final Report: Foreign and Military Intelligence, Book 1, 94th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975), 445.

²⁰ Ibid.

particular political, economic, or military result."²¹ The Pike Committee, named after Representative Otis Pike (D-New York), also examined covert action and determined that official procedures have not always been followed. It found that there was considerable evidence to support the claim that covert actions were "... irregularly approved, sloppily implemented, and at times have been forced on a reluctant CIA by the President and his National Security Advisor."²² The Pike Committee report went on to state that:

The procedures for approval of covert action have changed with administrations, political conditions and personalities. At various times, the approval process has been relatively informal, extraordinarily secretive, and pro-forma. ... The origin of many covert action projects is murky at best."²³

William R. Corson, in The Armies of Ignorance (1977), wrote that the approval rate for covert operations proposed by the National Security Council, and its sub-committees, was between forty and fifty percent from the Eisenhower administration through the Nixon administration. However, he stated 75 to 85 percent of covert activities "... carried out over that period were never

²¹ "The Pike Papers: The CIA Report the President Doesn't Want You to Read," The Village Voice (New York), 16 February 1976, Special Supplement, 83. The official committee report was not released to the public, but was subsequently leaked to The Village Voice which ran a special 24 page supplement with the gist of the committee's findings.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 83-84.

really reviewed by any organization or body outside of the group, agency, or service [of the intelligence community] which initiated them."²⁴

Gregory Treverton, who worked as a staff member on the Church Committee that investigated the CIA during the mid-1970's, defined the various types of covert activity in his book, Covert Action (1987) Treverton separated covert actions since World War II into three categories. The first category is "propaganda," which is the cheapest and easiest type of covert action. Secretly hiring journalists in another country to write articles favorable to the United States is an example of propaganda. The second category is "political action," which attempts to change the balance of political forces in a particular country. Political action is often accomplished by secretly providing money to particular groups to influence the political outcome of events. The third type of covert action is called "paramilitary operations." These are usually large in scale and consist of secret military aid and training that can cost millions of dollars.²⁵

According to the Church Committee's Final Report, during the 1960s the CIA's covert operations dominated agency activities because American policymakers had come to rely on them. As far as Africa was concerned, the Final Report stated

²⁴ William R. Corson, The Armies of Ignorance: The Rise of the American Intelligence Empire (New York: Dial Press, 1977), 349-350.

that during the early 1960s decolonization sparked an increase in the scale of CIA clandestine activities on that continent. Between 1959 and 1963 the number of CIA stations in Africa increased by 55.5 percent and were directed at limiting communist advances through the use of propaganda and political action.²⁶

Lemarchand in his article, "The CIA in Africa," quoted Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs David Newsom on March 14, 1973 stating that the United States had to overcome a "myth of manipulation" when dealing with Africa. But the fact was that the myth continued to exist throughout the Cold War era and was a factor in shaping views about the United States in the post-colonial era. Assistant Secretary Newsom stated, "I hope that we have been able to convince the African governments that we are not involved in anyway in seeking to determine how they are governed and by whom."²⁷ Yet a little over two years later the United States was deeply involved by means of a covert CIA operation in effecting the outcome of the Angolan civil war. Newsom's vision was not to see fruition during the Cold War. The "myth of manipulation" by the CIA and other U.S. Government agencies influenced African opinion as the African colonies

²⁵ Gregory F. Treverton, Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 13.

²⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee, Final Report: Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Foreign and Military Intelligence, Book 4, 63-64, 68.

²⁷ Lemarchand, "The CIA in Africa," 343, quoting from U.S. State Department, Current Foreign Policy, Publication 8701, May 1973, 4.

gained their independence and it has remained an issue throughout the post-colonial period. How much of the alleged CIA activity was myth and how much was reality will probably never be known. The CIA mystique has and will likely remain the stuff of speculation and controversy. In 1975, the magazine Jeune Afrique called the CIA a "permanent menace" to the independent nations of Africa.²⁸

Continuing the same train of thought, Harry Rositzke in his article, "America's Secret Operations" (1975), described the reputation of the CIA: "Abroad, [the term] 'CIA' has become a symbol of American imperialism, the protector of dictators, the enemy of the Left, the mastermind of coups and counter-coups in the developing world."²⁹ Rumors and stories of CIA activity in African politics began even before the year of African independence in 1960. The adverse rumors about the Agency have included plots to assassinate political leaders and plans to overthrow governments. Many of these allegations remain open to conjecture and the truth will probably never be known relative to the extent of CIA activities during the Cold War in Africa.

One famous incident involving the CIA in Africa during the 1960s, was the alleged assistance provided by the CIA in capturing the South African leader of the African National Congress, Nelson Mandela in 1962. William Blum, a former

²⁸ "Quand, a Travers Lumumba, la CIA Traquait le Nationalisme," Jeune Afrique, 5 December 1975, 26.

²⁹ Harry Rositzke, "America's Secret Operations: A Perspective," in Foreign Affairs 53 (January 1975): 334.

Foreign Service Officer and journalist, wrote in the book Killing Hope (1995) that Mandela, then eluding authorities, was captured because of information sent to the South African intelligence service by the CIA. The information was passed from the CIA to the South Africans in complete disregard to stated American policy at the time which forbade the exchange of intelligence. As a consequence Nelson Mandela was arrested and then spent over 27 years in South African prisons.³⁰ South African President Nelson Mandela in his autobiography, Long Walk to Freedom (1994), diplomatically asserted that he had never seen reliable evidence to support claims that the CIA was involved in his capture. He wrote: "Although the CIA has been responsible for many contemptible activities in its support of American imperialism, I cannot lay my capture at their door."³¹

Another example of CIA mystique in Africa during the early Cold War, and particularly during the 1960s, can be found in a pamphlet that was printed in Nigeria. The pamphlet, circulated in the 1960s, provided insight into the public perception of the CIA in Africa. While it is impossible to gauge the influence of a single booklet, it does give an inkling of the sort of materials being circulated at the time. The pamphlet was entitled "How American Secret Agents Operate in Africa," and in it the author alleged that there were "dire consequences" as a

³⁰ William Blum, Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995), 253.

³¹ Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1994), 278.

result of CIA activities in Nigeria and Africa in general. The author described the CIA as leading an "... invisible government with tentacles reaching to every corner of the world."³²

One of the first major CIA operations that helped to create the negative image of the CIA in Africa occurred in 1960-1961, when the CIA launched a campaign to "eliminate" Patrice Lumumba, the Prime Minister of the newly independent Republic of the Congo. What began as a broad set of political objectives by Washington to remove Lumumba from political power, and to keep him away from any position of authority, was transformed from White House guidance into a CIA covert operation to assassinate Prime Minister Lumumba.

Rene Lemarchand discussed the conditions he felt were necessary for CIA intervention in developing nations. The new Republic of the Congo fit nicely into his the criteria. Lemarchand wrote that "... the Congo from 1960 to 1965 and Angola in 1975-76 both experienced a relatively high level of C.I.A. involvement precisely when their political systems were least stable."³³ The covert operation was carried out in a fragile young country that was ripe for CIA activity. William Blum expressed the same sentiment that the early Congo Crisis did indeed provide exactly the delicate type of environment that Lemarchand had described. Blum wrote, "Into this disorder the

³² Kweku Dadson, How American Secret Agents Operate in Africa: Astounding Facts About the Methods by which American Secret Organisations Manipulate and Eliminate People and Governments in Africa (Winneba, Nigeria: Victory Press, undated).

³³ Lemarchand, The CIA in Africa, 347.

Western powers were 'naturally' drawn, principally Belgium to protect its vast mineral investments, and the United States, mindful of the fabulous wealth as well, and obsessed, as usual, with fighting 'communism.'³⁴

1960-1961 THE CIA AND THE EARLY CONGO CRISIS

In January 1960, less than six months before Congolese independence, Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles stated during a briefing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Central Africa, especially the Congo, would present the greatest problem that the CIA would have to deal with in the upcoming year. When asked if the CIA had adequate people to keep up with events in Africa, Dulles responded that he had tripled the number of personnel working on African issues. Director Dulles then asserted that he was spending ten times as much time on Africa as he had three years previously and that he was making a major effort in Africa because he thought that the CIA could, from the point of view of intelligence, be of some help there. The briefing by Dulles was important because it set the context for increased interest and involvement by the CIA in the Congo, months before the Congo became independent.³⁵

³⁴ Blum, Killing Hope, 156.

³⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Briefing on the World Situation," 18 January 1960, Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Historical Series), Vol. 12, 86th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1982), 47-48.

Several weeks later, on March 14, 1960, Director Dulles in a speech to the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences in New York emphasized the Cold War environment in which the CIA operated. During the speech he declared that the United States must stand up to the communist threat:

Today we have on the world scene the Soviet Union, Communist China, and the Communist bloc with their dynamic industrial, economic, and military programs, spearheading and directing Communist parties, Communist intrigues, and Communist subversion on a worldwide basis. We must recognize that we face stern and relentless competition.³⁶

Dulles concluded his speech with a challenge to his audience to look and "... see whether you can come up with any further ideas as to how we can better prepare ourselves to meet the Soviet challenge within the framework of our free institutions."³⁷ Harry Rositzke, in 1975, commented that "The cold war rationale for the covert action mission was simple: help stop the Russians."³⁸ The Cold War was the platform from which the CIA involved itself in the Congo Crisis, and as Dulles' speech showed, stopping the spread of communism provided all the justification needed for the CIA to take action. However, whether the CIA action in the Congo was within the framework of our free institutions is a matter of interpretation.

³⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Intelligence Estimating and National Security," Bulletin, 42 (14 March 1960): 416.

³⁷ Ibid., 417.

³⁸ Harry Rositzke, "America's Secret Operations," 341.

During the Eisenhower administration the hard line view of the Soviets was expressed not only by Allen Dulles, but also by his brother, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.³⁹ "John Foster Dulles preached anti-communism as a universal moral imperative."⁴⁰ He was considered to be an uncompromising Cold War warrior and an extremely powerful figure in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy during the Eisenhower administration. Seyom Brown stated that Eisenhower "... gave his Secretary of State an unusual amount of authority in policy formulation and implementation."⁴¹ In order to conduct foreign policy, Eisenhower approved of the use of covert action, which he considered an integral part of his foreign policy. It offered an effective alternative to the risks and costs of open military intervention in places like the Congo. Although he discussed covert action with the Dulles brothers, he was careful to ensure that no compromising documents of his participation were left behind. Eisenhower used covert action as a means of fighting the Cold War effectively against a ruthless enemy. He

³⁹ For an insightful discussion of the important foreign policy role that John Foster Dulles played in the Eisenhower administration, see Chester J. Pach, Jr. And Elmo Richardson, The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1991), 84-85.

⁴⁰ Seyom Brown, The Faces of Power: Constancy and Change in United States Foreign Policy From Truman to Clinton. 2d ed. (New York: Columbia Press, 1994), 8.

⁴¹ Ibid., 70.

left the details of conducting covert operations during his administration to the ardently anticommunist Dulles brothers.⁴²

During the early Congo Crisis the United States began to formulate ties to leaders whom it considered to be pro-Western and in whom it could trust to accomplish the goal of promoting stability and stopping the spread of communism. One of the key contacts established during the period was made by the CIA in Belgium in 1959, when the man who would head the CIA station in the Congo, Lawrence Devlin, first met Joseph Mobutu. In America's Tyrant (1993), Sean Kelly stated that the CIA first discovered Mobutu while he was working secretly for the Belgian police. Devlin, who was working for the CIA in Brussels at the time, received routine information that Mobutu had passed to the Belgians. Devlin was soon to play a pivotal role in shaping Mobutu as an American ally. He first met Mobutu, face to face, at an American Embassy reception in early 1960.⁴³

Patrice Lumumba, as a central figure in the Congolese Government, was the primary subject of concern of American policymakers throughout the summer of 1960 because he was considered by many senior officials in Washington to be a communist, or at the very least to possess communist tendencies. Lumumba was a young radical with Pan-Africanist sentiments and

⁴² Christopher Andrew, For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 202.

⁴³ Sean Kelly, America's Tyrant: The CIA and Mobutu of Zaire: How the United States Put Mobutu in Power, Protected Him from His Enemies, Helped Him Become One of the Richest Men in the World,

the chief of the *Mouvement National Congolais*. He was one of the Congo's only thirteen college graduates at the time of independence. The charismatic Lumumba had a large popular following. That was proven in the May 1960 elections prior to independence, what Lumumba's party received the largest single block of delegates in the legislature, and his was the only party to win seats in five of six provinces. Since no single party had a plurality, Lumumba was picked by the Belgians as the first Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo in a compromise arrangement.⁴⁴

In early July 1960, just five days after independence, a Congolese Army revolt broke out and created the first of many crisis situations for the new Prime Minister and his weak coalition government. The Belgians, with American acquiescence, claimed that Lumumba could not control the situation, and on that pretext intervened with military force in the Congo. The young Congolese government then sent out requests for aid to the United States, the United Nations, and the Soviet Union. The request to the Soviets for assistance was personally made by Patrice Lumumba. The United Nations intervened to restore order and the United States and the Soviet Union were both drawn into the crisis. The Eisenhower administration did not favor Lumumba; instead it supported the moderate politics of Congolese

and Lived to Regret it (Washington, D.C.: American University Press, 1993), 10-11.

⁴⁴ John Prados, Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations From WWII Through Iranscam (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 233.

President Joseph Kasavubu. As the summer of 1960 progressed, American diplomats and Lawrence Devlin, who had by then become the CIA Station Chief in the Congo, began to report negatively on Lumumba's initiatives. Subsequently they increasingly hardened their positions against Lumumba.⁴⁵

During August the level of concern in Washington increased regarding both Lumumba's political strength and his communist tendencies among national security policymakers in the Eisenhower administration. Washington considered Lumumba to be a radical leftist and a dangerous threat. For example, on August 18, 1960 CIA Station Chief Devlin sent the following cable to Washington:

Embassy and station believe Congo experiencing classic communist effort take over government. Many forces at work here; Soviets, Communist party, etc. Although difficult determine major influencing factors to predict outcome struggle for power not far off. Whether or not Lumumba actually commie, or just playing commie game to assist his solidifying power, anti-West forces rapidly increasing power Congo and there may be little time left in which to take action to avoid another Cuba.⁴⁶

In response, Bronson Tweedy, chief of the Africa Division of the CIA's clandestine services, cabled Devlin on August 18 stating that he was seeking State Department approval to proceed with the objective of replacing Lumumba based on Devlin's belief that

⁴⁵ Ibid., 233-234.

⁴⁶ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Cable: Possible Communist Takeover," 18 August 1960, CIA Research Reports: Africa, 1946-1976 (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1983), Reel 1, Document 0444.

Lumumba must go. The next day, Richard Bissell, Director of the CIA's covert operations branch, sent a follow-up cable to Leopoldville which stated that Devlin was authorized to proceed with the operation to replace Lumumba. Several days later Devlin cabled back that President Kasavubu had been approached regarding the possible assassination of Lumumba, but that he refused to participate.⁴⁷

On August 25 the subcommittee of the National Security Council responsible for planning covert operations, known as the "Special Group," met to discuss plans for political actions against Lumumba. During this meeting Gordon Gray, President Eisenhower's personal representative to the Special Group, reported that the President felt that "very straightforward action" was required in this situation. The minutes of the meeting stated that the Group had "... finally agreed that planning for the Congo would not necessarily rule out 'consideration' of any particular kind of activity which might contribute to getting rid of Lumumba."⁴⁸

The next day, August 26, Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles personally cabled Lawrence Devlin in the Congo and

⁴⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, An Interim Report: Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975), 15. Hereafter cited as U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee, Assassination Plots.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 15. See also, Stephen E. Ambrose, Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 300-301.

told him that the removal of Lumumba was an urgent objective.

The cable stated:

In high quarters here it is the clear-cut conclusion that if [Lumumba] continues to hold high office, the inevitable result will at best be chaos and at worst pave the way to communist takeover of the Congo with disastrous consequences for the prestige of UN and for the interest of the free world generally. Consequently we conclude that his removal must be an urgent and prime objective and that under existing conditions this should be a high priority of our covert action. ... you can act on your own authority.⁴⁹

Dulles' cable also stated that Devlin had "wider authority" to deal with Lumumba and that the Station Chief could take "more aggressive action if it can remain covert," Dulles then stated, "we realize that targets of opportunity may present themselves to you." In addition, the DCI authorized \$100,000 to "... carry out any crash programs on which you do not have the opportunity to consult HQs."⁵⁰

The decision by Eisenhower to "remove" Lumumba was an extremely important precedent. The vague guidance that the President gave the Special Group was clearly interpreted by Allen Dulles and the CIA as the green light to have Lumumba removed from office; and in the event that that failed to have him killed.⁵¹ In his Church Committee testimony in 1975 Lawrence

⁴⁹ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Cable: Lumumba and a Possible Communist Takeover," 26 August 1960, CIA Research Reports, Reel 1, Document 0449.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ For an insightful analysis as to whether or not Eisenhower directly ordered the assassination of Lumumba see Kelly, America's Tyrant, 59-61.

Devlin stated that he definitely had the impression that Eisenhower himself had ordered the assassination of Lumumba.⁵² The effect was that the Agency received essentially *carte blanche* from the President and then went after Lumumba on its own, with virtually no oversight. Although what evidence we have implies that Eisenhower never directly ordered that Lumumba be killed, he worded his directions in such a way that caused Director Dulles and other senior officials to understand that he wanted Lumumba dead.

Once the CIA was allowed to proceed, the Agency followed its own course of action to shape events in Congolese politics and when that failed the CIA went on its own to have Lumumba assassinated. An example of this attitude by the CIA can be found in a cable that was sent on September 24 from DCI Dulles to Devlin in Leopoldville. "We wish give every possible support," he cabled "in eliminating Lumumba from any possibility resuming governmental position or if he fails in Leopoldville, setting himself in Stanleyville or elsewhere."⁵³

Consequently, the CIA, acting virtually independently undertook a policy with two main goals which consisted of permanently disposing of Lumumba, and then creating a pro-Western military government capable of maintaining stability.⁵⁴

⁵² See U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee, Assassination Plots, 25-26.

⁵³ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Cable: Lumumba," 24 September 1960, CIA Research Reports, Reel 2, Document 0002.

⁵⁴ Peter J. Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 57.

The Agency moved rapidly to alter events in the Congo that would favor the U.S. position. On September 5, President Kasavubu, using the continued political crisis as justification, dismissed Lumumba from his office of Prime Minister. Before he took that step, the Special Group had approved financial support for Kasavubu's undertaking.⁵⁵ Stephen Weissman in "CIA Covert Action in Angola and Zaire" (1979) stated that "... there is strong circumstantial evidence of a U.S. role in the Kasavubu coup of September 5 against Lumumba."⁵⁶ The evidence indicates that the Agency lobbied Congolese politicians, with cash in hand, to keep parliament closed so that Lumumba would not have the opportunity to state his case and possibly attempt to regain his office. The CIA continued moving forward with its plans to depose of Lumumba by contacting its Congolese clients regarding the possible assassination of Lumumba.⁵⁷

In late summer 1960 the Deputy Director for Plans of the CIA, Richard Bissell directed a CIA scientist, Sidney Gottlieb to make plans to assassinate an "African leader." Bissell, Gottlieb later told the Church Committee, told the scientist that the assignment had come from "the highest authority." Gottlieb procured toxic biological materials and was then ordered to proceed to Leopoldville to deliver the materials to

⁵⁵ Prados, Presidents' Secret Wars, 234, see also Weissman, "CIA Covert Action in Zaire and Angola," 269.

⁵⁶ Stephen R. Weissman, "CIA Covert Action in Zaire and Angola: Patterns and Consequences," Political Science Quarterly 94 (Summer 1979): 267.

⁵⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee, Assassination Plots, 16-17.

CIA Station Chief Devlin.⁵⁸ Sean Kelly called Gottlieb's toxic materials an "assassination kit" which included the poison, an antidote, needles, rubber gloves, and gauze masks. Gottlieb sent the kit by diplomatic pouch to Leopoldville and made plans to arrive there on September 27. The CIA cabled Devlin to expect an important visitor who would identify himself as "Joe from Paris."⁵⁹

In the meantime, while Gottlieb was preparing his poison, Joseph Mobutu staged his first coup on September 14 by seizing control of the government in order to "prevent further chaos." Mobutu had been in the payroll of the CIA and the Agency was involved in the takeover of the government.⁶⁰ Andrew Tully, in CIA: The Inside Story (1962), wrote that, "... the CIA had the man to take charge in [President] Kasavubu's name. He was of course, Joseph Mobutu ..."⁶¹ Michael Schatzberg in Mobutu or Chaos? emphatically stated that, "It is now also certain that the CIA bore much of the responsibility for Mobutu's coup ... The Agency was 'heavily involved' in Mobutu's emergence ..."⁶² Schatzberg went on to state that "Mobutu was aided in his efforts to seize power by Lawrence Devlin."⁶³ Four days later the CIA played a key role in ensuring Mobutu's safety by warning him of an assassination attempt by pro-Lumumbist elements.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 19.

⁵⁹ Kelly, America's Tyrant, 61.

⁶⁰ Blum, Killing Hope, 158.

⁶¹ Andrew Tully, CIA: The Inside Story (New York: William Morrow, 1962), 222.

⁶² Schatzberg, Mobutu or Chaos?, 21.

⁶³ Ibid.

Mobutu was counseled by Lawrence Devlin that such attacks would continue as long as Lumumba remained on the scene. On September 18, Mobutu ordered the arrest of Lumumba.

In the beginning of October Gottlieb arrived in Leopoldville and turned the assassination kit over to Devlin. He explained that the poison needed to be put in Lumumba's food, or perhaps in his toothpaste. Gottlieb assured Devlin that the poison was untraceable and that it would not expose the CIA. During his visit, Gottlieb gave Devlin the impression that the plot had been approved by the President. Devlin then began searching for someone who could get the poison to Lumumba. By then the deposed Prime Minister was under virtual house arrest in his residence, surrounded by United Nations troops, who gave him protective custody and were protecting him from the Congolese soldiers who had also surrounded his residence in an attempt to arrest him. By October 5, Gottlieb's poison had passed its expiration date, so he dumped the poison in the Congo River and flew back to Washington.⁶⁴

Subsequently, Station Chief Devlin explored several other possibilities in the Fall of 1960 to kill Lumumba. One of the ideas that Devlin considered was to use a sniper's rifle to shoot Lumumba. Devlin sent a cable to CIA headquarters which in part stated:

If case officer sent, recommend HQs pouch soonest high powered foreign make rifle with telescopic scope and silencer. Hunting good here when lights right.

⁶⁴ Kelly, America's Tyrant, 62.

However as hunting rifles now forbidden, would keep rifle in office pending opening of hunting season.⁶⁵

Devlin was also aware of the fact that the residence where Lumumba was under U.N. protective custody was heavily guarded and very visible. Devlin, aware that the assassination plot was dragging, asked CIA headquarters to send Justin O'Donnell, a case officer who specialized in clandestine operations, to assist him. The case officer refused to go to the Congo and assassinate Lumumba on moral grounds, but he agreed to assist in the effort to trick Lumumba away from his residence, an act which did not seem to trouble him.⁶⁶

O'Donnell arrived on November 3, and immediately contacted CIA headquarters for outside help from a contract agent who had previously worked for the CIA. The man was a foreign citizen with a criminal background, and was considered by O'Donnell, according to his later Church Committee testimony, to be capable of assassination. Devlin, in the meantime, had brought in another contract agent to assist in the operation. The agent was later described by the CIA as a stateless soldier of fortune who had received CIA military training. He was sent to the Congo after completing plastic surgery and wore a toupee to alter his appearance. However, in the end none of the agents accomplished anything because Lumumba remained inaccessible in his securely guarded residence as the stand-off around his house

⁶⁵ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "Cable: Hunting Season," 17 October 1960, CIA Research Reports, Reel 2, Document 0004.

continued between the United Nations forces and the Congolese troops.⁶⁷

The standoff continued until November 27, when Lumumba escaped from his surrounded residence and headed towards Stanleyville to join his followers. However, Mobutu's troops caught up with and captured him, and on December 2 he was flown back to Leopoldville under heavy guard. The day after Lumumba escaped, a cable was sent to CIA headquarters by the Leopoldville station which implied Agency cooperation with Mobutu in finding Lumumba. The text of the cable read in part, "... [station] working with [Congolese Government] to get roads blocked and troops alerted [unreadable] possible road block." Later, however, Lawrence Devlin, during his Church Committee testimony in 1975, said that the CIA had no advance knowledge of Lumumba's escape.⁶⁸

Lumumba in any case was held by the Congolese military and flown on January 17, 1961 to Elisabethville, the capital of the breakaway Katangan province. There Lumumba was delivered into the hands of his most "fanatical enemies."⁶⁹ According to the United Nations investigation into the death of Lumumba, he was killed on January 17 by Katangan authorities at or near the

⁶⁶ Kelly, America's Tyrant, 63, see also U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee, Assassination Plots, 37-42.

⁶⁷ Kelly, America's Tyrant, 64, see also U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee, Assassination Plots, 43-48.

⁶⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee, Assassination Plots, 48.

⁶⁹ Schatzberg, Mobutu or Chaos?, 24.

airport where the plane had landed.⁷⁰ The news of his death was not announced publicly by the Katangan Government until February 13.

Two days after Lumumba was flown to Katanga, the CIA head of station in Elisabethville sent the following message to CIA headquarters, "Thanks for Patrice. If we had known he was coming we would have baked a snake."⁷¹ Additionally, the cable stated that the local CIA station had received no advance warning from any of its sources that Lumumba was being flown to Katanga. The cable also stated that the Agency had not been kept informed of Lumumba's status once he arrived in Elisabethville. On February 10, the CIA head of station in Elisabethville cabled that the fate of Lumumba was unknown and that his whereabouts and condition were "the best kept secret in Katanga." Devlin and other senior CIA officials later testified during the Church Committee hearings (1975) that the CIA was not involved in the events that led to Lumumba's death.⁷² Although impossible to prove, it appears that these statements were not correct and that the CIA did play a role in the events leading up to Lumumba's death.

⁷⁰ John Stockwell, a former CIA officer, recounted that during a conversation with another CIA officer, the man stated that after Lumumba was killed, he drove around the Katangan capital, Elisabethville, after curfew with Lumumba's body in the trunk of his car, trying to decide what to do with the body. See John Stockwell, In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story (New York: Norton, 1978), 105.

⁷¹ Ibid., 51.

⁷² Ibid.

Subsequent analysis of the cable traffic and later testimony indicates clearly the nature and degree of CIA involvement in these events. Cable traffic during the time of Lumumba's internment showed that the CIA was in fact kept informed of Lumumba's condition and movements during the month of January. Certainly Devlin was aware that Lumumba was being transferred, but he was probably not aware that the plane had been diverted in mid-flight to Katanga. At that time the Agency was still interested in Lumumba's condition and whereabouts, because it continued to see Lumumba as a threat. The report by the Church Committee stated that the Congolese government under Mobutu and the CIA shared a common concern that Lumumba might still somehow return to power.⁷³

The testimony by Devlin and the other CIA officials has been disputed by a number of experts. Madeline Kalb in The Congo Cables (1982) argued that the U.S. was at least partially responsible for Lumumba's death. She stated: "... the evidence leaves little doubt that U.S. officials encouraged Lumumba's Congolese opponents to eliminate him."⁷⁴ Michael Schatzberg wrote that the CIA played a major behind the scenes role in eliminating Lumumba. He argued that while the official plot maybe failed, the CIA was clearly heavily involved and must bear some of the responsibility for Lumumba's death. "Although it

⁷³ U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee, Assassination Plots, 49-50.

⁷⁴ Madeline G. Kalb, The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa - From Eisenhower to Kennedy (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1982), 189.

appears that the CIA did not directly 'pull the trigger,' it was, at the very least, an encouraging and facilitating behind-the-scenes presence. There was certain complicity in Lumumba's death ..."⁷⁵ William Minter in "The Limits of Liberal Africa Policy" (1984), concluded that "The United States Government, operating through agencies as diverse as the United Nations and the Central Intelligence Agency, was indeed the leading force behind Lumumba's removal from office and his assassination."⁷⁶ Minter went on to more explain specifically the role of the CIA, "At the climax, when Lumumba was transferred to Katanga and killed, the 'smoking gun' was absent as is indeed consistent with the CIA mandate that the hand of the U.S. be invisible."⁷⁷ Clearly the evidence indicates that the Agency had a central role in the demise of Lumumba. Taking care of him permanently solved a great deal of problems for the Agency, for then it could work towards consolidating the power of the moderates without the threat of Lumumba returning.

During the early portion of the Congo Crisis the CIA was involved in numerous ways to effect the outcome of events in the new Republic of the Congo. The CIA worked to cultivate contacts among the Congolese politicians who it felt would be supportive of U.S. interests. Political leaders like President Kasavubu and Colonel Mobutu were on the CIA payroll and readily accepted

⁷⁵ Schatzberg, Mobutu or Chaos?, 24-25.

⁷⁶ William Minter, "The Limits of Liberal Africa Policy: Lessons From the Congo Crisis," TransAfrica Forum 2 (Fall 1984): 29.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 34.

guidance from the CIA. The Agency was at the center of Congolese politics, and it worked diligently to shape events so that the outcome would benefit Western, and of course American, interests. On September 14, The CIA paved the way for President Kasavubu to dismiss Prime Minister Lumumba, and the Agency helped Mobutu stage his coup, and then at the behest of the CIA, Mobutu arrested Lumumba; kept him under close guard; and most likely engineered the diversion of Lumumba's plane to Katanga which led to the ultimate demise of the ill-fated Prime Minister. What the CIA failed to accomplish on its own, it managed to achieve through the co-opted Congolese leadership. The Agency's purpose was to keep the Congo safe from communism, and its definition was to succeed by any means necessary. In doing so it acted without any real constraints from Washington and thus followed its own agenda throughout the Crisis. Gregory Treverton in Covert Action addressed the outcome of CIA activity during the early Congo Crisis that "In the Congo in the early 1960s," he argued, "the CIA spent a million dollars a day to achieve an ambiguous 'success' through a series of actions so tangled that today even foreign policy experts cannot recall them in broad outline."⁷⁸

During the Congo Crisis the position of the CIA was increasingly supported in policy making circles, while the milder position of the State Department lost favor as the spiral of violence in the Congo escalated. The State Department

⁷⁸ Treverton, Covert Action, 190.

advocated a diplomatic approach to win Lumumba over by ensuring his inclusion in a coalition government dominated by moderate, pro-Western elements. But debate within the Eisenhower administration was resolved by the President, and Eisenhower and his powerful Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, were deferring action in the Congo to the Agency. The result was that the State Department lost out to the more extremist voice of the CIA. "The more hardline vision of the CIA found favor," Schraeder argued, "with an administration whose worldview strongly favored the removal of radical Third World leaders through covert means."⁷⁹

Mobutu relinquished power of the government, back to civilian authority, in the Spring of 1961, but he remained a commanding political figure due to his increasingly tight control of the Congolese military. During the next few years, as the Congo Crisis continued unabated, the CIA continued to support and nurture Mobutu until he seized power again in 1965. For example, the CIA provided Mobutu and his followers with money and munitions to assist the Congolese military in their attempts to overcome the deteriorating security situation and in combating a series of rebellions that broke out across the country.⁸⁰

Once Lumumba was dead the CIA operated with more impunity than ever in the Congo. This was true for a variety of reasons,

⁷⁹ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Towards Africa, 59.

⁸⁰ Schatzberg, Mobutu or Chaos?, 29.

not the least of them being the fact that the spotlight on American foreign policy had begun to shift from events in the Congo to other foreign policy concerns, such as the aborted Bay of Pigs invasion (August 1961). Because Washington's attention was diverted, the CIA was able to operate in the Congo with even less oversight than had previously been the case during the Lumumba assassination plot. During the next few years the CIA remained no less active in the Congo. For example, in 1961 Lawrence Devlin found an underground sewage tunnel that led to a supposedly secure conference area during a national political conference. The conference included all of the Congolese political leadership and was convened to discuss the political situation and to choose a new government. The tunnel was used to move Agency bribe money to key legislators to influence the outcome of voting that was going on inside the conference area.⁸¹ The CIA wanted to have a voice in the Congolese political process and the best way to do that was to buy votes.

The CIA was also helpful in assisting the relatively moderate Congolese leadership during a series of rebellions that took place during 1964 and 1965. In response, The CIA set up a cover operation that hired exiled anti-Castro Cuban pilots to fly aircraft which were supplied by the Americans for the Congolese military. The airplanes were flown in support of Congolese ground operations to put down the rebellions. John Prados explained the role that the Cuban pilots played in

⁸¹ Kelly, America's Tyrant, 80.

supporting the Congolese Army: "... the CIA air unit remained in place as an absolute vital resource. Mobutu had no pilots of his own."⁸² A New York Times article described the level of official support behind the air operation:

The C.I.A.'s operation in the Congo was at all times responsible to and welcomed by the policy-makers of the United States. It was these policy-makers who chose to make the Agency the instrument of political and military intervention in another nation's affairs.⁸³

In November 1964, the CIA was extensively involved in military operations to rescue members of the American consulate in Stanleyville, who had been taken hostage when a rebel force took control of the city. The CIA organized a special unit of Cuban exile mercenaries who were led by an American paramilitary officer to participate in the Stanleyville rescue.⁸⁴

A central question in the study of the CIA's actions in the Congo was the degree to which it was acting as an instrument of Washington policy, as opposed to acting on its own. The answer to that question is somewhat murky. Throughout, the early Congo Crisis from the time that the CIA became active in the Congo during the early 1960s, senior government officials in Washington continued to assert that the CIA was adhering to official government policy, and not acting under its own accord. In 1963 during a news conference President Kennedy responded to

⁸² Prados, Presidents' Secret Wars, 237.

⁸³ Tom Wicker et al., "How C.I.A. Put 'Instant Air Force' Into Congo," New York Times, 1 April 1966, sec. A, p. 1.

⁸⁴ See Kelly, America's Tyrant, Chapters 7-10.

a reporter's question regarding the role of independent operations conducted by the CIA. Kennedy responded that he had looked over the record of CIA activities during the previous nine months and had found that the CIA had not acted on its own. The President said that the CIA "... does not create policy, it attempts to execute it in those areas where it has competence and responsibility ... the CIA has not carried out independent activities ..."⁸⁵

Another example of the public image of the CIA as a team player was given by Secretary of State Dean Rusk in 1965. During a question and answer session following a speech at the closing session of the White House Conference on International Cooperation, Secretary Rusk stated, "... the CIA does not make policy and it is not engaged in activities unknown to the policy offices of the Government."⁸⁶ Those statements common throughout the duration of the Cold War in Africa were important, because they were made for a purpose. By shielding the actions of the CIA, senior governmental officials were both condoning and protecting Agency adventurism in distant places around the globe. The fact was that in the case of the Congo, the CIA was allowed to operate without close scrutiny and to set its own agenda.

⁸⁵ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "The President's News Conference, October 9, 1963," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1963 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1963), 768. The question was asked regarding the situation in South Vietnam. However, the response addressed the CIA in a general sense.

As previously mentioned, official attention in Washington shifted increasingly during the early 1960s to other trouble spots around the world, such as the aborted Bay of Pigs invasion (1961), the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)⁸⁷ and the increasing American involvement in Vietnam. While those areas were in the spotlight, the CIA quietly continued to operate without attracting much attention in Washington. Meanwhile senior administration officials continuously assured the American public that the CIA was acting in accordance with its policies and was not out of control in places like Central Africa.

1965 - THE AGENCY HELPS MOBUTU COME TO POWER

On November 24, 1965 Joseph Mobutu who had by then been promoted to Lieutenant General staged his second coup by dismissing all politicians in the government and taking control himself. Mobutu took those actions with the blessing and support of the CIA.⁸⁸ Elise Forbes Pachter in her dissertation "Our Man in Kinshasa" (1987), argued that Mobutu enjoyed

⁸⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Following Remarks Question and Answer by Secretary Rusk," Bulletin, 53 (20 December 1965): 980.

⁸⁷ During the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, when weapons verification and inspections in Cuba were a contentious issue between the superpowers, Fidel Castro made a revealing reply to a question asked during a radio interview: "We resolutely reject any attempt, or any type of investigation, come from where it may, over our territory. Cuba is not the Congo." In light of CIA involvement in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, several CIA assassination attempts against his life and considering the history of U.S. involvement in the Congo, it is not surprising that he chose to make such a comparison. See, The National Security Archive: The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962 (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1990), Document 0888.

⁸⁸ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Towards Africa, 76.

continued overt and covert American backing from 1960 until his second coup in 1965. Based on numerous interviews with governmental officials in the United States and the Congo as well as other key figures involved in the coup, she concluded that the CIA was involved in helping Mobutu come to power in the Congo.⁸⁹ Interviews conducted by Stephen Weissman in "The CIA and US Policy in Zaire and Angola" (1978) also confirm the fact that the CIA played a role in the November 1965 coup.⁹⁰ Not surprisingly, the first American official to meet the self-declared new President of the Congo was Lawrence Devlin, who slipped past reporters into Mobutu's residence. Mobutu urged Devlin to cable Washington that "... the Congolese government is prepared to work in close cooperation with the United States."⁹¹

The 1965 coup that put Mobutu in power stabilized the continuing turbulent situation in the Congo and was the result of the careful attention devoted to Mobutu since 1960, when he had first been placed on the CIA's payroll. The Agency had worked closely with Mobutu to ensure that he would not fail; and now from 1965 onward the Agency could reap its biggest reward, for Mobutu was finally taking power and putting an end

⁸⁹ Elise Forbes Pachter, "Our Man in Kinshasa: U.S. Relations With Mobutu, 1970-1983, Patron-Client Relations in the International Sphere." Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1987. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1987) No. 9233701, 106.

⁹⁰ Stephen R. Weissman, "The CIA and US Policy in Zaire and Angola," in American Policy in Southern Africa: The Stakes and the Stance, ed. Rene Lemarchand (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978), 394.

⁹¹ Kelly, America's Tyrant, 169.

to the days of endless crisis and chaos. William Blum described the final result of five years of CIA intervention in the Congo:

... there was now fixed in power, over a more-or-less unified Congo, a man who would be more co-operative with the CIA and its African adventures and with Western capital, and less accessible to the socialist bloc, than the likes of Lumumba, Gizenga, et al. would have been. The CIA chalked this one up as a victory.⁹²

The CIA success encouraged the Agency to remain on in what became known as the Republic of Zaire. During the late 1960s and the early 1970s the CIA, compared to the State Department and other governmental agencies, "... served as a most enthusiastic bureaucratic proponent for enhancing the US-Zairian special relationship."⁹³ During the early 1970s the CIA trained Mobutu's personal guard detachment and provided intelligence that enabled Mobutu to obtain privileged information on political developments in the region. This was in recognition of the Agency's perception of Mobutu's central role as a powerful client in Central Africa. Mobutu was considered to be a vital anticommunist ally in the eyes of the Agency. The CIA considered Zaire to be a growing regional power that would increasingly play a role in maintaining regional stability. Mobutu also served as an important link to the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and its leader Holden Roberto⁹⁴ which were located in Zaire. Roberto himself had been

⁹² Blum, Killing Hope, 162.

⁹³ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Towards Africa, 81.

⁹⁴ Holden Roberto was Mobutu's brother in law.

picked out as a CIA agent. Until 1969 Roberto received money and weapons; after 1969, he received a \$10,000 a year stipend from the CIA for "intelligence gathering." In 1974 as events in Angola became more chaotic, the Agency stepped up its links to Roberto and began passing him small amounts of money.⁹⁵ The close ties that Mobutu had to the CIA were further strengthened in 1974 when Lawrence Devlin, newly retired, returned to Zaire. Working for an American businessman in Kinshasa, Devlin remained a critical "unofficial" link between Mobutu and the CIA.⁹⁶

The special relationship between the United States and Zaire underwent a period of growing tension and cooperation during 1974-1975. The State Department was concerned about Mobutu's lack of economic planning and increasing external debt. Yet at the same time, the level of cooperation between Mobutu and the CIA grew closer during the period. Mobutu and the United States had one important thing in common; neither wanted to see the Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) gain a victory in Angola. "The basis of this cooperation," Schraeder argued, "was a shared desire to dictate the political make-up of the soon to be independent Angolan government."⁹⁷

By the mid-1970s the Zairian relationship with the United States had begun to cool. In part this occurred when Mobutu saw his close friend President Richard Nixon resign from office in 1974, and he sought to avoid any possible connection to the

⁹⁵ Treverton, Covert Action, 151.

⁹⁶ Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Towards Africa, 81.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 83-84.

fallen President.. Also during the same period, the CIA came under increased public scrutiny in the United States and Mobutu became fearful that as a consequence his name would be leaked to the press as a CIA contact. In order to distance himself from his benefactors, Mobutu announced in June 1975 that he was the victim of a CIA sponsored assassination and coup plot. This caught American officials by surprise because at the time Mobutu was "... deeply involved in the civil war in Angola on the side of the CIA-supported forces."⁹⁸

1975-1976 THE CIA AND THE ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR

By 1975 President Mobutu Sese Seko⁹⁹, who by then was regarded by the CIA as one of its African success stories, had been ruling Zaire for a decade as a progressively corrupt dictator. In the process, he had amassed immense personal wealth that amounted to billions of dollars, while at the same time Zaire remained one of the most impoverished countries in the world.¹⁰⁰ In 1975 the CIA began to give Zaire an increased amount of attention. As covert funds became available from Washington, and the uproar over Mobutu's alleged assassination plot passed, the relationship between Zaire and the CIA once again grew close, with both partners once again functioning as cooperating allies, now with the common goal of stopping the MPLA. "In 1975," according to Jonathan Kwitny, "Mobutu had not

⁹⁸ Blum, Killing Hope, 258.

⁹⁹ Mobutu changed his name from Joseph Desire Mobutu to Mobutu Sese Seko in 1966.

just harbored Angolan guerrillas, but had invaded Angola with his own troops to try to keep the MPLA out of government."¹⁰¹ In addition to a portion of the covert funds, Mobutu received millions of dollars in American financial aid at a time when the Zairian economy was still reeling from Mobutu's corruption, his failed economic policies and the fall in copper prices in the world market. Consequently, American support proved to be a critical boost to Mobutu at a time when he needed it the most.¹⁰²

In January 1975 the CIA proposed to bolster Holden Roberto and the FNLA with \$300,000 in political action funds. The CIA had maintained a relationship through its Kinshasa (Leopoldville) station with the Angolan guerrilla faction since 1961. The money which had been approved by the 40 Committee¹⁰³ of the National Security Council was, at the urging of Secretary of State Kissinger, authorized by President Ford. At the same time the CIA requested \$100,000 for Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). That was rejected because UNITA was not considered by the NSC to be as reliable an ally as the FNLA. An official who attended the NSC meeting was quoted as saying that the primary concern was not to stop the MPLA, but to "bolster psychologically our immediate

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 257.

¹⁰¹ Jonathan Kwitny, Endless Enemies: The Making of an Unfriendly World (New York: Congdon & Weed, 1984), 139.

¹⁰² Kelly, America's Tyrant, 201-206 and Schraeder, United States Policy Towards Africa, 85-86.

¹⁰³ The 40 Committee was a sub-committee of the National Security Council with responsibility for covert operations.

ally," Zaire.¹⁰⁴ Mobutu's pressure to support the FNLA was a factor in the decision making process. Weissman went on to state, "Thus U.S. covert and overt 'successes' in Zaire were now leading toward further intervention in Angola."¹⁰⁵

The Pike Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives (1975) found that the U.S. involvement in Angola was "initiated in part at the request of a third party." The third party was, of course, Mobutu of Zaire. The report went on to state that the U.S. had an interest in promoting the stability of Mobutu and that Secretary of State Kissinger's desire to reward and protect African leaders friendly to the U.S. was a major factor in the American involvement in Angola.¹⁰⁶ As covered in the previous chapter, during these years Secretary Kissinger was publicly promoting the spread of communism as the primary reason for U.S. involvement. In reality, however, the American motivations for involvement were much more complex. Stopping communism, helping Mobutu, and economic factors all played roles in shaping the U.S. position.

During the summer of 1975 the CIA began planning for a covert operation in Angola.¹⁰⁷ John Stockwell, a CIA case

¹⁰⁴ Weissman, CIA Covert Action in Zaire and Angola, 282.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ "The Pike Papers," The Village Voice, 84-85.

¹⁰⁷ The following section on the CIA covert operation in Angola relies extensively on John Stockwell's memoir, In Search of Enemies. His insider perspective and the fact that the vast majority of his information has been corroborated by other scholars, makes this the definitive book regarding this covert action. It is interesting to note that Stockwell's book is listed with a brief description in the CIA's Home Page on the World Wide Web (the Internet). The entry can be found in the

officer, was appointed as the chief of the CIA's special task force which was established by the Agency specifically to deal with the situation in Angola. Stockwell, the CIA Angolan Task Force Chief, established a special task force to deal with the situation there. Planning commenced immediately under the CIA code name of IAFEATURE. President Ford, acting on the recommendation of the 40 Committee of the National Security Council, approved the covert action plan that was prepared by the CIA. The President authorized \$14 million for the operation by the end of July. On July 29 the first planeload of weapons was on its way to Zaire.¹⁰⁸

A Presidential "finding" dated July 18, 1975 provided the official approval and the legal justification for the CIA to commence its operation. The Presidential finding was intended to satisfy the reporting requirements of the Hughes-Ryan Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974, which required that all covert actions other than clandestine intelligence collection be reported by the President to Congress.¹⁰⁹ Stockwell felt that the finding was "deliberately vague and unspecific":

Intelligence Literature section under Opposing Viewpoints. The description reads as follows, "Stockwell was a former Agency case officer in Africa. His book argues that covert action operations are not essential for American national security and describes what he considers 'scandalous, absurd operations.'" The fact that this book is listed is especially interesting when one considers the fact that the CIA fought public disclosure of this book in court.

¹⁰⁸ Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, 55.

¹⁰⁹ Treverton, Covert Action, 154-155.

It said only that the President found the operation to be important to the national security of the United States. The country wasn't even specified - only the continent, Africa. The operation was described as the provision of material, support, and advice to moderate nationalist movements for their use in creating a stable climate to allow genuine self-determination in newly emerging African states.¹¹⁰

The vagueness of the Presidential finding was an attempt to gloss over the real intentions of the Ford Administration in Angola.

The Presidential finding of July 18 is important because it provides another example of senior governmental officials giving the CIA broad, generic guidance, which was then interpreted by the CIA as it saw fit. Because of it, the Agency could essentially act the way it wanted to accomplish the goal of meeting the national security of the U.S. How materials, support and advice were to be provided were all left to the Agency. As shown above, the CIA's idea of "creating a stable environment" was to commence with a multi-million dollar paramilitary operation of a covert nature, through Zaire and into Angola, in order to "deter" the pro-Marxist MPLA. The tradition of vagueness that began in the loose wording of the National Security Act of 1947 and the orders that were left open to interpretation that authorized the CIA to assassinate Patrice Lumumba, was continued in the Presidential authorization that began the CIA's paramilitary program in

¹¹⁰ Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, 47.

Angola. The mission was authorized and IAFEATURE commenced immediately.

The Zairian capital of Kinshasa rapidly became the hub of CIA operations in Central Africa to support the mushrooming covert operation in Angola. The CIA Station in Kinshasa was designated as the CIA regional headquarters for IAFEATURE. By the beginning of August weapons and military supplies were streaming into the Zairian capital on a continuous basis. Once the "green light" had been turned on, the CIA showed itself ready to move fast. The official guidance for the operation was to deter the MPLA, but the CIA soon came to interpret that as defeating the MPLA. Included in the shipments were mortars, antitank rockets and grenade launchers, which were flown in to Kinshasa in 25 ton loads.¹¹¹ Supplies were rapidly flown in and a ship began loading equipment to support the mission.¹¹²

On August 20, 1975 President Ford authorized an additional expenditure of \$10.7 million for the Angolan covert operation. The extra funds brought the total budget for IAFEATURE to \$24.7 million. The money was used to purchase additional arms, ammunition and advisors for Angola. By the end of CIA involvement in Angola, the total budget for the covert action had risen to \$31.7 million.¹¹³ Furthermore that official budget did not include the salaries of CIA employees, weapons already

¹¹¹ Ibid., 58-59.

¹¹² According to Stockwell, the CIA used a U.S. Navy ship called the "American Champion" to transport military equipment for the Agency. The U.S. Navy later billed the CIA \$500,000 for use of the ship.

shipped, and (in Kwitny's words) "... about \$100 million in arms and general aid quickly hustled to Zaire."¹¹⁴ IAFEATURE continued to increase in size and by late August the CIA advised the inter-agency monitoring group¹¹⁵, which had oversight for the Angolan operation, that the level of warfare had reached the point that large amounts of funding required immediately in order escalate activities in Angola so as to stop the MPLA from winning.¹¹⁶

The CIA covert operation continued into the autumn of 1975. At Secretary Kissinger's behest, South Africa became involved in Angola and worked with the CIA to coordinate activities. Stockwell wrote: "The South Africans came into the conflict cautiously at first, watching the expanding U.S. program and timing their steps to the CIA's."¹¹⁷ To Kissinger, the South Africans provided the perfect solution to the constraints facing the CIA. They did not have to answer to anyone, and they brought money and military expertise into the conflict. The CIA worked closely with the South African Bureau of State Security, South Africa's intelligence service, to

¹¹³ Ibid., 162, 206.

¹¹⁴ Kwitny, Endless Enemies, 139.

¹¹⁵ This body was an entity of the National Security Council which was responsible for the coordination and oversight of covert activities. The monitoring group was essentially an organization that monitored itself, as it was composed of members from the various executive departments in the NSC. The monitoring group also coordinated the efforts of the various agencies involved in supporting resource intense operations like IAFEATURE.

¹¹⁶ Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, 168.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 185.

coordinate the efforts of the FNLA and UNITA in combating the MPLA.¹¹⁸

In September 1975 news of the CIA's involvement in Angola began to leak. Stockwell stated: "At first we were successful in keeping our hand in the war hidden, while exposing the Soviet arms program. However, cracks began to appear in our cover facade ..." ¹¹⁹ Throughout the fall the supposedly covert operation became increasingly public as allegation after allegation was made in the press. By November 1975 when the South Africans publicly acknowledged their involvement in Angola, the covert action in Angola had begun to unravel under increased public and congressional scrutiny.¹²⁰

In a typical example of CIA adventurism during the Angolan Civil War, the Agency in October 1975 helped Zaire launch an invasion to seize the valuable, oil-rich, enclave of Cabinda, Angola which was under MPLA control. Mobutu seized the opportunity to annex the Cabinda enclave of Angola, which was the primary source of oil production for Angola and whose worth was estimated to be in the millions of dollars. Mobutu approached the CIA, which then promptly flew in a one thousand-man weapons package for use in the invasion. Shortly thereafter, CIA officers began visiting with the Zairian forces which were to conduct the operation in order to coordinate the assault. On November 2, an invasion force attacked Cabinda,

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 187.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 199.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 202.

but it was repulsed by the Cuban and MPLA defenders. The Mobutu inspired mission into Angolan territory was a failure.¹²¹

It was during November and December 1975, Stockwell wrote, that the situation for the CIA became difficult. Because Congress was unwilling to allocate additional funds, there was not enough money to continue the operation. In addition, the National Security Council discovered that the CIA was using American military advisors in Angola, against its wishes. Furthermore, the congressional investigative committees were searching for answers to questions regarding IAFEATURE that the CIA preferred not to address. In response the CIA, in order to get the most out of their remaining funds, turned to hiring mercenaries to accomplish its mission.¹²²

In December 1975, according to Treverton, "... the Senate voted for the Clark Amendment banning further covert assistance - for the first time in American history cutting off a 'covert' program with an open vote. The House of Representatives followed suit in January."¹²³ As a result, the CIA was forced to draw its covert operation in Angola to a close. Meanwhile the numbers of Cubans and the amount of Soviet support continued to increase as 1975 came to an end. With the funds still in its budget, the CIA sought to continue the operation as long as possible. On January 6, 1976, after passage of the Clark Amendment, a senior White House advisor officially told

¹²¹ Ibid., 164.

¹²² Ibid., 217, 219-221.

¹²³ Treverton, Covert Action, 158.

to CIA to seek an outright military victory in Angola and that stopping the MPLA was no longer enough. However, Congress reacted angrily to the continued activity. It threatened to review all budgets in exhaustive detail, which would have exposed much of IAFEATURE. That was too much for the administration and the Agency to counter. Finally, on February 19, 1976 when the President signed the bill that banned all support for Angola; the CIA admitted defeat and began to withdraw.¹²⁴

At that point, the Agency started to pay off those in Angola associated with its operation with what IAFEATURE funds that remained in the CIA budget. The CIA, now under the leadership of DCI George Bush, began to dispose of \$4.8 million in remaining funds. UNITA, which was by then the clear favorite of the CIA, received \$2 million; the FNLA received \$900,000; and the rest of the funds were used to pay various accounts and outstanding bills. On April 28, 1976 almost \$2 million was delivered to Mobutu in Zaire so that he could distribute the funds to the two Angolan factions on behalf of the CIA. Instead, Mobutu pocketed \$1,300,000 of the money that was intended for the FNLA and UNITA, refusing even to receive any representatives of either of the Angolan factions or the United States.¹²⁵

Stockwell described the aftermath of CIA intervention in Angola this way: "... the United States was exposed, dishonored,

¹²⁴ Stockwell, In Search of Enemies, 230-234.

and discredited in the eyes of the world. We had lost and fifteen thousand Cubans were installed in Angola ..."¹²⁶ Jonathan Kwitny described Washington's official reaction to public allegations that the CIA was involved in covert activity in Central Africa. "The U.S. government and its policymakers reacted normally to the debacle. They lied. When the press began to bear down on the story, the State Department and the CIA flatly denied any U.S. involvement."¹²⁷ Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the Director of Central Intelligence at the time, William Colby, were also accused of misleading Congress as to the real extent of CIA covert action in Angola.¹²⁸ Senator George McGovern (D-Minn.) in a report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1978, described the final result of covert intervention in Angola:

The Angolan civil war marked a critical turning point in United States policy toward Africa. Covert military assistance to two of the rival liberation movements in that conflict sparked a controversy in the United States only three months after United States troops withdrew from Vietnam. ... It was chiefly from the Angolan fiasco that United States policymakers in the Carter Administration drew the conclusion that American policy should 'no longer mirror Soviet activities in Africa.'¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Ibid., 245-246.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 248.

¹²⁷ Kwitny, Endless Enemies, 144.

¹²⁸ Seymour M. Hersh, "Kissinger-Colby Briefings on C.I.A. Called Misleading by Senate Panel," New York Times, 16 July 1978, sec. A, p. 1.

¹²⁹ U.S. Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, A Report: Impressions of Southern Africa, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1979), 21-22.

Throughout 1975 the Secretary of State publicly maintained that the CIA was acting legally in the conduct of its covert activities. In June 1975, while he was aggressively pushing for a covert operation in Angola, Secretary Kissinger answered a reporter's question as to whether or not the CIA helped or hurt the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Kissinger answered, "I think the CIA is important to the conduct of our foreign policy, and I do not believe that it has damaged the conduct of our foreign policy."¹³⁰ In December 1975, after the general public had become aware of IAFEATURE, Kissinger continued to cover up his own actions in escalating the American involvement in a distant civil war, and for the actions of the CIA, by declaring:

I believe that the covert operations of the CIA with which I am familiar were decided upon by serious people in the national interest, in a world in which there is a gray area between overt diplomatic activity and military activity. ... I am prepared to justify every covert operation that the United States has engaged in with which I am familiar was in the national interest.¹³¹

Kissinger, one of the main proponents of covert action in the Ford administration, believed that he was a "serious person" acting in a gray area to support the national interest. But the question was whether he was acting in his own interest to satisfy his determination to stop Soviet expansion by unleashing the CIA and sending millions of dollars to alter the outcome of

¹³⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Kissinger's Remarks at PBS Luncheon," Bulletin, 73 (7 July 1975): 26.

¹³¹ U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Kissinger's News Conference of November 10," Bulletin 73 (1 December 1975): 782.

a civil war that had arguably little to do with American interests or national security. With minimal congressional oversight and a burning desire to see his agenda put into action, there seemed to be no stopping Kissinger. Once the CIA received authorization, the Agency proceeded to follow its own agenda. Allowed to decide both the large and the small details of IAFEATURE on its own, the CIA in effect did as it pleased. President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger were only concerned with the big picture.

Treverton in aptly assessed Washington's urge to use the CIA to accomplish a foreign policy objective. "In many respects," he wrote, "the Angola episode runs parallel to the Bay of Pigs or Nicaragua. Under the heat of perceived threat, diplomatic action alone did not seem enough."¹³² In a pattern all too reminiscent of the Congo Crisis, the CIA was given an extensive amount of leeway to conduct its version of foreign policy; as long as it fitted into the broad goals of the administration in Washington, that was acceptable. The CIA took the hard line view of American foreign policy in Central Africa and translated that vision into action on the ground in Angola via Zaire.

The end of the CIA's covert operation in Angola did not end the civil war. As Sean Kelly wrote that the worst consequence of the decision to intervene in Angola was the sixteen years of civil war that followed. The U.S forced the

¹³² Treverton, Covert Action, 155.

situation and caused the increasing spiral of weapons and armed hostility that brought in the Soviets and the Cubans on one side and the South Africans on the other. "The U.S., Zairian, and South African support for the FNLA and UNITA," he argued, "pushed the MPLA government into an even greater dependency on Cuba and the Soviet Union."¹³³ The CIA intervention contributed to an escalation of the civil war that would most likely not have gotten so large if the United States had not gotten involved. With significant help from the United States, South Africa and Zaire, Jonas Savimbi's UNITA was able to fight a protracted struggle against the MPLA government in Angola.¹³⁴

As for Mobutu, he ended up with the worst of all possible outcomes for his efforts in the Angolan civil war. Kelly wrote: "... Mobutu helped achieve in Angola what he must have desired least; a pro-Soviet, Cuban backed, unfriendly neighbor, whose territory had become a refuge for thousands of armed Zairian exiles ..."¹³⁵ Mobutu worked closely with the CIA to help shape events in Central Africa, as he had done on a regular basis since taking office. This time, however, the CIA was no longer in a position to help the Zairian leader because of the congressional ban on further funding. In the final analysis, Mobutu did not have much to show for all of his intentions to alter the outcome of the Angolan Civil War. The CIA, which had

¹³³ Kelly, America's Tyrant, 239.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 239-240.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 236.

come to his side to defeat the MPLA, had instead left an Angola that was in far worse shape than prior to its arrival.

The United States did not intercede again on behalf of its close ally in Central Africa until 1977 and 1978, when President Mobutu faced invasions from outside Zaire. These two separate incidents were called, Shaba I and Shaba II. In early March 1977 an exile army of Zairian expatriates invaded Zaire from Angola. The exiles were members of the same ethnic group that comprised the majority of members in the MPLA. Most of the soldiers were originally from the province of Shaba (formerly Katanga) who had been forced out of the country after the Katangan secessionist movement failed. At the urgent request of Mobutu, the United States and other Western powers rushed to provide aid to help him counter the threat in the mineral-rich province. The United States immediately sent in \$2 million worth of military supplies within less than a month, the amount of American support was up to \$15 million. The invasion was put down, and thereafter the United States remained committed to helping Mobutu whenever he asked for assistance.¹³⁶

The same exile army, now located in Angola, re-attacked into Shaba in 1978. Once again, the United States responded rapidly with what can be termed "non-lethal" military aid to Mobutu. The Americans also provided aircraft for an evacuation of foreigners from Shaba and for transportation of forces assisting Mobutu in his quest to turn back the invasion. The

¹³⁶ Blum, Killing Hope, 259-262.

attack was repulsed in less than a month, and the borders of Zaire were again secured.

Relations remained friendly between the CIA and Mobutu throughout the early 1980s. Mobutu was encouraged to see the Reagan administration come to office, and was said to have toasted his election victory with champagne, calling the American ambassador in Kinshasa at 7:30 in the morning to offer his personal congratulations.¹³⁷ And indeed, the Reagan administration gave Mobutu reason to be encouraged, for it immediately became more supportive of him and not nearly as concerned about human rights as had the Carter administration previously. President Reagan was especially grateful for Zairian support in Chadian peace-keeping efforts aimed at countering Libya in 1981 and 1983. To the Reagan administration this meant that Mobutu shared their outrage over Libyan activities.¹³⁸ Furthermore, the relationship between the United States and Zaire reached new heights during the mid-1980s as Zaire again came to the forefront of a covert operation to support the forces of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in the protracted Angolan civil war. Reagan chose Angola as a place to make a stand as he rekindled the Cold War stand-off mentality of countering the Soviets wherever possible under his policy of

¹³⁷ Pachter, "Our Man in Kinshasa," 399.

¹³⁸ Schatzberg, Mobutu or Chaos?, 69. Muammar Qaddafi, the leader of Libya was considered by the Reagan administration to be a serious threat to regional and international stability. Qaddafi had expansionist desires and invaded Chad to seize disputed territory that both countries claimed. Libya was also

"rolling back" the communists. Reagan initiated covert activity increased around the globe as he put the CIA into action to stop perceived communist expansion in places like Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Angola.

1985-1987 THE CIA RETURNS TO ANGOLA

In August 1985, after a three year long battle with Congress, the Reagan administration won a repeal of the 1976 Clark Amendment that banned all military aid to rebel forces in Angola. President Reagan immediately approved \$15 million in military aid for UNITA. Military assistance began to flow to UNITA overtly and covertly by early 1986. Over the previous decade, since the days of IAFEATURE, UNITA had maintained close ties with the South Africans.¹³⁹ Those close ties had allowed UNITA in effect to sustain itself until the Americans returned. By January 1987 the CIA was sending stinger anti-aircraft missiles, anti-tank missiles and other technologically advanced military equipment to UNITA. United States covert assistance eventually topped \$300 million.¹⁴⁰

A great deal of the military supplies were shipped to the UNITA rebels through Kamina air base in Zaire. Zaire was again fulfilling its role as an arms conduit for covert military aid

considered by Washington to be a leading contributor to international terrorism.

¹³⁹ Prados, Presidents' Secret Wars, 464.

¹⁴⁰ Daniel Spikes, Angola and the Politics of Intervention: From Local Brush War to Chronic Crisis in Southern Africa (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1993), 322.

from the United States. Several reports at the time suggested that Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, from the White House National Security Council staff, journeyed to Jonas Savimbi's main headquarters inside southern Angola in order to personally facilitate the arms transfers to UNITA.¹⁴¹

Largely because of the recent nature of these events, little else is known about the full extent of CIA involvement in Angola during the mid-1980s.¹⁴² What is understood is that by 1988 the United States had brokered the deal that allowed for the withdraw of Cuban forces from Angola in exchange for a South African withdrawal from Namibia and the granting of its independence. The Reagan administration took credit for the agreement by arguing that by providing extra combat power to UNITA, the United States was able to tip the balance of power in Angola which then forced the MPLA to the bargaining table. Yet as late as the mid-1990s, Angola still had not found the peace that it had been searching for so long.

¹⁴¹ Kurt M. Campbell, "Soviet Policy in Southern Africa: Angola and Mozambique," in Regional Conflict and U.S. Policy: Angola and Mozambique, ed. Richard J. Bloomfield (Algonac, MI: Reference Publications, 1988), 101.

¹⁴² There is surprisingly little literature available on the CIA activities in Angola in the mid-1980s. Of books that do mention the intervention, there is at most a small section, or, more often, only a few sentences. Perhaps, over time, more will be known about this topic. For a brief, but insightful, description of this period and the actions of President Reagan and his advisors see, Bob Woodward, Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987. (New York; Simon and Schuster, 1987), 426.

CONCLUSION

The history of the CIA in Central Africa during the Cold War is the story of a governmental organization that received its instructions from the senior echelons of government and then executed those instructions as it saw fit. During the early Congo Crisis in 1960-1961, the CIA took the hard line view that Patrice Lumumba had to be gotten rid of because he was a threat to stability. The Eisenhower administration concurred that Lumumba had to be removed; how the job got done was left to the Agency. As the CIA was pursuing Lumumba, it became engaged in a high stakes game to control and dominate the Congolese political landscape in order to ensure that its clients came to power. That policy of intervention in the internal politics of the Congo came to fruition in November 1965 when Joseph Mobutu came to power, in part because of the assistance and encouragement of the CIA. During the mid-1970s Mobutu worked closely with his American associates during the Angolan Civil War in order to defeat the MPLA. Again the CIA received its "marching orders" from Washington, and again the Agency decided on its own how to accomplish the job. IAFEATURE quickly became a significant covert paramilitary operation with dubious objectives in a region of arguably marginal national interest, beginning just three months following the United States withdrew from Vietnam. Finally, during the mid-1980s the United States, again using Zaire as an arms conduit, became involved in a multi-million dollar operation to influence the outcome of the protracted

Angolan Civil War. Using the Cold War as a license to operate gave the CIA the credibility and the independence to take matters into its own hands. As long as the Agency was countering the perceived threat of communist expansion, Washington was unconcerned with how the job got done. The CIA was given a great deal of latitude and it took full advantage of each opportunity that presented itself in Central Africa.

With regards to CIA activities in Central Africa, it is interesting to note the numerous parallels between the early Congo Crisis and the beginnings of the Angola Civil War. In both cases the Agency moved into a situation where there was a power vacuum and where the American government perceived a communist threat far greater than that which actually existed. Indeed, CIA involvement seemed to create additional attention and thereby attracted the attention of communist countries like the Soviet Union to the region. The CIA has a tradition of moving into countries that are weak politically and are experiencing some degree of chaos, for it is in that type of environment that the CIA can establish a foothold and proceed to conduct its activities.

There can be little doubt that official American foreign policy acted under the rubric of "national security" in order to protect the activities of the CIA in Central Africa. The Cold War atmosphere gave the CIA the freedom to act with virtual impunity. During each of the periods addressed in this chapter, the public policy stance of Washington gave the CIA the

flexibility to conduct covert operations as it saw fit. In the case of the early Congo Crisis, it was not until fifteen years later, as a result of the congressional investigations of 1975, that the public learned what had happened regarding the assassination plot against Patrice Lumumba. Subsequently, CIA covert activity in Angola failed to remain covert while it was in progress, and that fact had a tremendous influence on the outcome of IAFEATURE. Because the public and Congress were aware of the situation, the covert action did not last. Probably the most public of all of the periods was the Reagan administration's funding of UNITA during the mid-1980s, President Reagan made no secret that he strongly supported what he referred to as the "freedom fighters" of UNITA because in his view they were on the "front lines" of stopping communism. During the Cold War American foreign policy did indeed act as a smoke screen for the CIA in Central Africa by providing the Agency the freedom to operate independently.

CHAPTER IV

CENTRAL AFRICAN CIA OPERATIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

FINDINGS

The CIA was active in Central Africa throughout the period from 1960 to 1990. This thesis has highlighted four periods when the CIA was particularly engaged in Central Africa. The CIA first intervened in the region during the early Congo Crisis (1960) to counter the perceived communist threat and to prevent further chaos. The original CIA mandate to gather information soon expanded into a Washington approved assassination plot, followed by an active Agency involvement in shaping political events in the Congo in order to ensure that a friendly government assumed power. After nurturing and supporting Joseph Mobutu for five years, the CIA finally helped him to stage a coup in 1965, which in effect made this friendly, pro-Western leader of the strategically located, and mineral rich country in the heart of Africa, its client.

The CIA next became heavily engaged in the region when IAFEATURE was launched in 1975, partially in response to the request for assistance from Mobutu, in order to stop the pro-Marxist MPLA faction from gaining the upper hand in the Angolan Civil War. The CIA, without discernible permission from Washington, escalated the covert action to include advanced

weapons systems, the use of military advisors in Angola, and ultimately close cooperation with South Africa. Finally, during the mid-1980s, the CIA became heavily involved again in the protracted Angolan Civil War, during which it used Zaire as a conduit through which to funnel weapons and equipment to the UNITA faction fighting in Angola. Each of these interventions demonstrated the CIA acting, to varying degrees, as a self-directed agency that did in fact conduct its own foreign policy.

During each of these four periods American foreign policy was publicly promoting four general goals that can be groped as follows: halting the advance of the communists; discouraging the intervention of outside countries; promoting self-determination and democratic values; and the use of diplomacy in place of conflict. As Michael Schatzberg wrote, the dealings of the U.S. government in Central Africa "... have often reflected this tension between the imperative of maintaining security against the Soviet Union on one hand, and the desire to encourage decency and democracy on the other."¹ While successive U.S. administrations were paying lip service to these goals, the same government privately explored and utilized other options that would strengthen American positions and allow Washington the freedom to operate from positions of strength. The tool that was selected time and time again to handle crises on behalf of the United States government in Central Africa was the CIA,

¹ Michael G. Schatzberg, Mobutu or Chaos? The United States and Zaire, 1960-1990 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 5.

which was in a vague process to be used as a secret instrument of foreign policy without any public attribution. Covert action by the Agency thus became the tool of choice of successive policymakers in order to accomplish what they could not do otherwise without risking public disapproval.

Clearly the CIA did act under its own accord to pursue objectives and implement policy of its own fabrication during the Cold War in Central Africa. At times the CIA worked closely with Washington, while and at other times it acted as an autonomous agency that created its own foreign policy. The final result of CIA intervention in Central Africa was the creation of a climate whereby one branch of the government bureaucracy often was not talking to the other branch, opening a gap into which the CIA was given license to operate on its own. Often with minimal direction, the CIA moved in to fill the policy vacuum and interpret for itself what needed to be done and how it should occur. Thus in Central Africa from the 1960s through the 1980s the CIA's foreign policy was not always consistent with the announced foreign policy of the United States. Although it is impossible to state definitively that the CIA always acted on its own, or to specify to what degree it did act by itself, there can be little doubt that as a general rule the Agency acted as an unrestrained and unregulated player in the American foreign policy arena. Oftentimes, official U.S. policy served as a cover for, and to protect, the Agency's clandestine activities in Central Africa.

CONCLUSION

The activities of the Central Intelligence Agency in Central Africa were conducted under the long-standing Cold War national security imperative of halting worldwide communist expansion. U.S. Representative Dave McCurdy (D-Oklahoma) stated in "Glasnost for the CIA," (1994) that

American intelligence was a spyglass focused on the Soviet Union, keeping track of Soviet research and development and watching Soviet activities throughout the developing world. U.S. intelligence caught other things only in its peripheral vision.²

As this thesis has shown, in Central Africa the CIA did more than simply "watch" the actions of the Soviet Union. The Agency was committed to actively countering the actions of the Soviets around the globe, including Central Africa. Clandestine activity was used as an extension of foreign policy by Washington to accomplish that goal. The Agency was actively involved in shaping and determining the outcome of events in the Cold War proxy battlefield of Central Africa. From the CIA's perspective, operations like the CIA intervention early in the Congo Crisis could be considered a success, for the Agency accomplished its goal of eliminating Patrice Lumumba and then establishing a friendly and enduring pro-Western government in the Congo. The CIA was thus able to remain dominant in the Congo/Zaire and to utilize a valuable ally who served its

² Dave McCurdy, "Glasnost for the CIA," Foreign Affairs, 73 (Jan/Feb 1994): 125.

interests. Meanwhile other Agency operations like IAFEATURE were not as successful, and achieved little more than the continuation of the Angolan Civil War and the hasty cessation of covert activity. In each of these cases, the CIA was in effect allowed to act as an independent entity by successive U.S. administrations and other agencies of the government that remained indifferent to the CIA's actions in Central Africa.

Since the time of the congressional investigations of the CIA in 1975, the role of legislative oversight of the Agency has remained a contentious issue between the legislative and the executive branches. "These events of 'the Year of Intelligence' [1975] touched off a struggle to regulate the intelligence agencies," asserted Prados, "that has ebbed and flowed ever since."³ The executive branch has typically claimed that the CIA is used for the conduct of foreign policy and thus does not fall under the purview of Congress. The legislative branch has supported reforms to allow for greater reporting and oversight of the CIA. A series of reforms have been considered over the years regarding changes to improve the operations of the CIA and increase oversight by Congress and through it the public at large. Most of these proposals have had little influence on changing how the CIA actually operated during the period, and have implemented little in the way of real reform.

³ John Prados, Presidents' Secret Wars, CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations From World War II Through Iranscam (New York: Quill, William Morrow, 1988), 347.

The post-Cold War era has seen a number of new proposals surface to improve oversight and the operations of the Agency.⁴ In 1996 the presidentially appointed Brown Commission suggested a series of changes that would shrink the size of the Agency, but would leave its structure and functions (including covert action) essentially unchanged. In other words, under the Brown Commission proposals the ability of the CIA to undertake its own foreign policy and to conduct covert actions with minimal oversight would be allowed to continue. The only major reform suggested by the Brown Commission was that the heretofore classified budgets of the intelligence community in general, including the CIA, be published.⁵ Consequently, in spite of its dubious legal record in the conduct of covert action during the Cold War, the CIA will in all likelihood be allowed by Congress to conduct business as usual, just as it has since its birth in 1947. Not even in the reform-minded atmosphere of post-Cold War United States government does real reform seem possible.

In 1995, the recently-appointed Director of Central Intelligence John Deutch gave a speech to the National Press Club, in which he stated that there were two central issues facing the intelligence community:

First we must be effective. We must deploy our considerable resources against the most pressing

⁴ For a discussion of the role of the CIA in the post-Cold War era see David L. Boren, "The Intelligence Community: How Crucial?", *Foreign Affairs* 71 (Summer 1992): 52-62; and Ernest R. May, "Intelligence: Backing into the Future," *ibid.*: 63-72.

⁵ Tim Weiner, "Commission Recommends Streamlined Spy Agencies," *New York Times*, 1 March 1996, sec. A, p. 13.

security threats of the post-Cold War era. Second, we must be accountable. We must carry out our intelligence operations in an efficient and responsible manner. At the same time we must maintain an effective espionage service.⁶

One can only hope that the DCI was sincere when he stated that the Agency must be held accountable for its actions, especially in light of the fact that the Agency will continue to conduct clandestine activities. Past experience in Central Africa would show that the CIA was neither a consistently effective proponent of American foreign policy, nor often accountable in the conduct of its affairs.

In addition, Director of Central Intelligence Deutch stated: "I want the public to understand what we are doing so that they will have confidence that our intelligence activities are carried out in a manner consistent with the nation's interest and values."⁷ That statement lies at the heart of what the CIA has failed to do in the past, hold itself publicly accountable. And yet the CIA Credo, listed in Appendix B states the following: "We conduct our activities and ourselves according to the highest standards of integrity, morality and honor and according to the spirit and letter of our law and Constitution."⁸ In reality, throughout the Cold War, the Agency

⁶ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, John Deutch, "The Future of US Intelligence - Charting a Course for Change," Speech presented at the National Press Club, 11 July 1995. (Washington, D.C.: CIA Home Page on the Internet, 1996).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The CIA Credo is listed in Appendix B and is from U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Factbook on Intelligence (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1991), 28.

consistently acted in Central Africa behind a veil that the American public, and much of official Washington, could never penetrate.

Consequently, in the post-Cold War era, as America's intelligence agencies transform themselves, willingly or otherwise, it is important to remember the mistakes of the past. Adventurism in Central Africa was one, where failures, like IAFEATURE in Angola wasted millions of dollars and accomplished little in furthering American interests, values, or public understanding.

The 1995 speech by DCI Deutch also gave an insightful summary of the role that covert operations has played, and will continue to play, in the conduct of American foreign policy:

I believe that the US needs to maintain, and perhaps even expand, covert actions as a policy tool. But here again, we will not undertake covert action to support policy objectives, unless it is approved at the highest level of government and only if the President authorizes such action after a scrupulous review process, including timely notification of the appropriate Congressional oversight bodies.⁹

That would constitute a definite departure from past policy. In the past, if the CIA had only acted to support stated policy and not created it, then covert action would not have had such a frequently destructive influence on official foreign policy. But instead, all too often, as John Stockwell stated, "The CIA's function was to provide the aggressive option in foreign

⁹ Ibid.

affairs."¹⁰ That hard line attitude all too frequently helped to create the conditions for the CIA to intervene. The Agency's position was that it must win the policy debate, then the Agency could operate as it pleased. This thesis has provided examples of the times when the CIA did just that: received official guidance but then executed that guidance on its own, after determining for itself how the job could best be accomplished. What is left out of the DCI's statement is what really happens once the President directs the CIA to conduct a covert operation.

In addition, the CIA under current procedures, is required simply to tell Congress what it is doing; simple notification is its only requirement. Successive U.S. administrations have argued the CIA should not be tightly regulated and monitored because its activities fall under the realm of foreign policy, and as such are under the exclusive purview of the President, who has constitutional authority over matters dealing with foreign policy. There is little that Congress can do to control the Agency's excesses except to cut its funds, as it did in the case of IAFEATURE. Otherwise Congress cannot do a great deal to stop the CIA from acting as an independent entity in the foreign policy arena. Thus in spite of much discussion the post-Cold War era, there appears to be little change in the way that the Agency conducts its own foreign policy. The Cold War has ended, and the CIA remains intent on insuring the "national security"

¹⁰ John Stockwell, In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story, (New York:

of the United States. The Cold War may be over, but the ill-defined concept of "national security" remains. One can only hope that all branches the U.S. government and the American public become aware of its actions of the CIA and that they seek reform as an empowered and enlightened citizenry that holds the intelligence community responsible for their actions. Only through public awareness, legislative control and public vigilance will the CIA change.

For thirty years the CIA was allowed to operate in Central Africa with virtual impunity. In 1963, in a statement that rang true with regard to CIA activities in Central Africa during the Cold War, ex-President Harry Truman, who had signed the 1947 legislation authorizing the creation of the CIA, expressed his concern over the direction that the CIA was taking towards becoming a policy making agency. His statement, noteworthy even in 1963, still rings uncannily true today. "For some time now," he asserted, "I have been disturbed by the way the CIA has been diverted from its original assignment. It has become a policy-making arm of the Government."¹¹

Norton, 1978), 251.

¹¹ President Truman's statement can be found in Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence (New York: Dell Publishing, 1974), 38.

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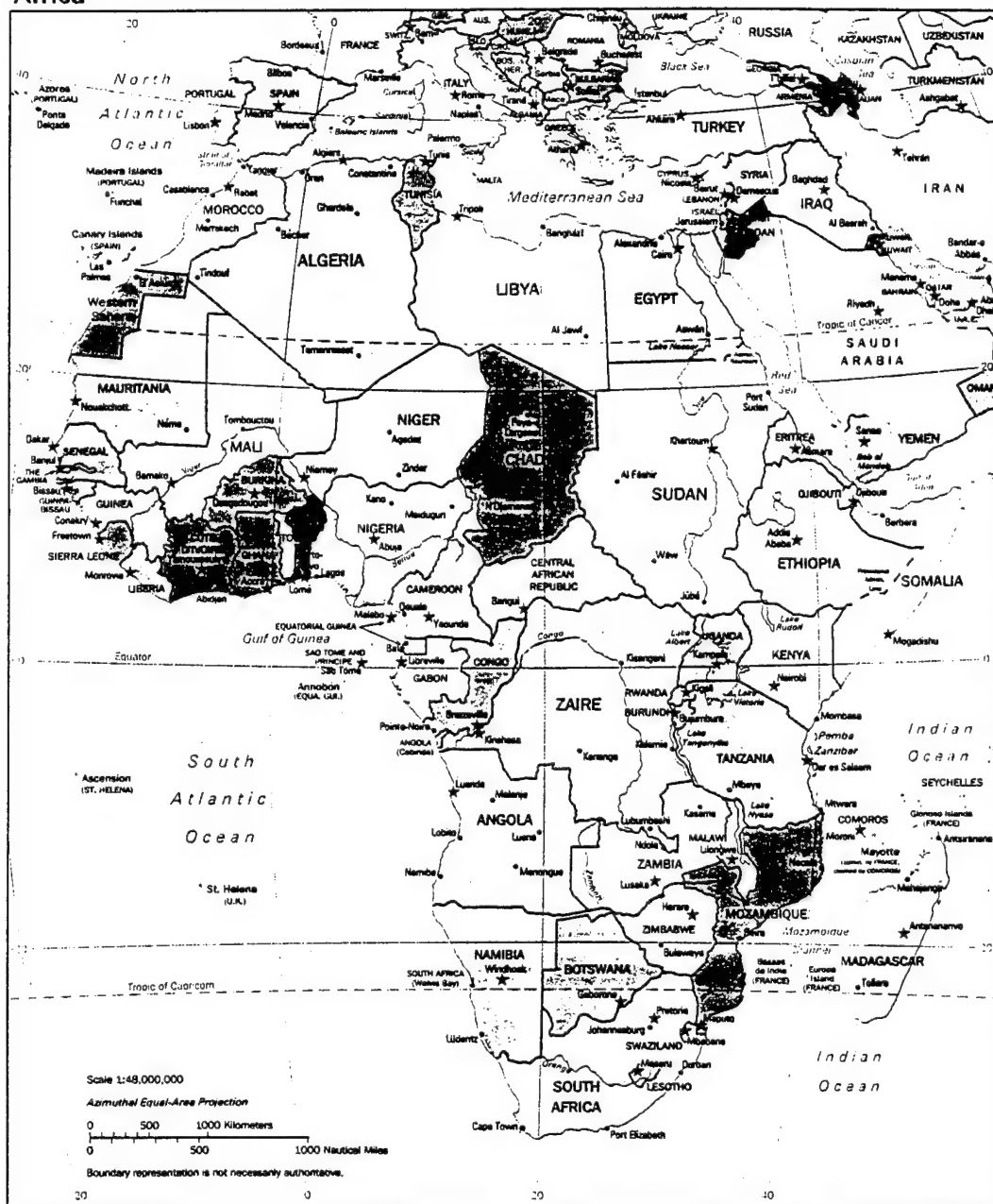
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APPENDIX A

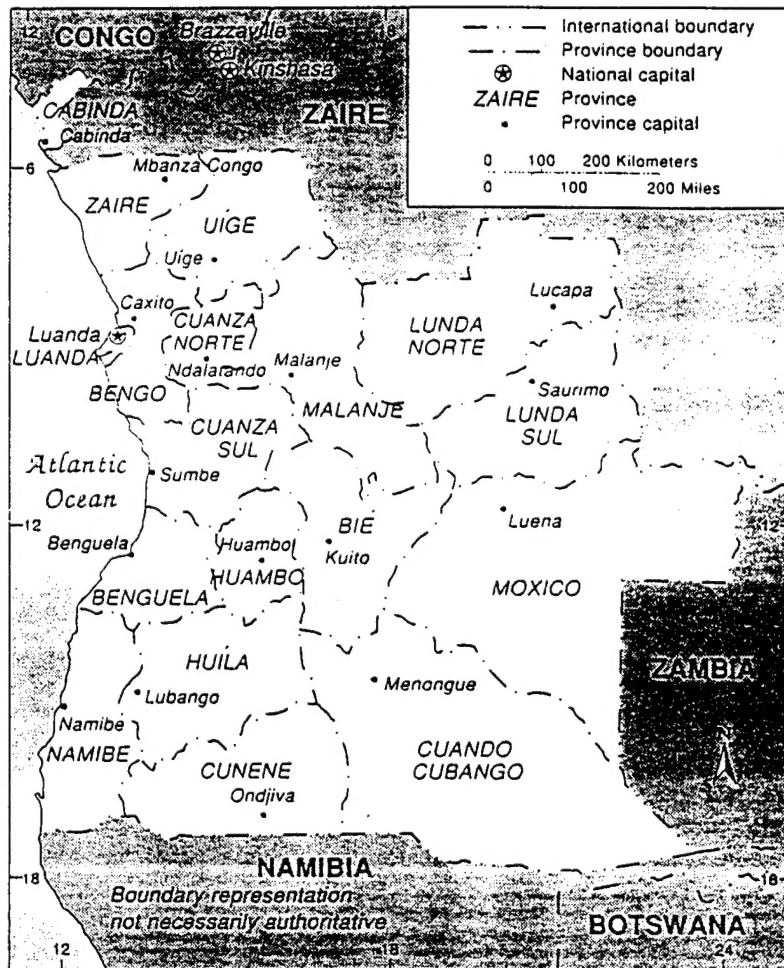
MAP OF AFRICA¹

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APPENDIX B

CIA Vision, Mission, and Values¹

Our Vision

To be the keystone of a US Intelligence Community that is pre-eminent in the world, known for both the high quality of our work and the excellence of our people.

Our Mission

We support the President, the National Security Council, and all who make and execute US national security by:

- Providing accurate, evidence-based, comprehensive, and timely foreign intelligence related to national security; and
- Conducting counterintelligence activities, special activities, and other functions related to foreign intelligence and national security as directed by the President.

Our Core beliefs and Values

What we stand for:

- Intelligence that adds substantial value to the management of crises, the conduct of war, and the development of policy.
- Objectivity in the substance of Intelligence, a deep commitment to the customer in its form and timing.

How we do our work:

- Teamwork throughout the Agency and the Intelligence Community
- Total participation of an excellent and diverse work force
- Innovating and taking risks to get the job done

¹ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Vision, Mission, and Values Statement (Washington, D.C.: CIA Home Page on the Internet, 1996).

- Adapting to both a changing world environment and evolving customer needs
- Accepting accountability for our actions
- Continuous improvement in all that we do

The CIA Credo²

We are the Central Intelligence Agency.

We produce timely and high quality intelligence for the President and Government of the United States.

We provide objective and unbiased evaluations and are always open to new perceptions and ready to challenge conventional wisdom.

We perform special intelligence tasks at the request of the President.

We conduct our activities and ourselves according to the highest standards of integrity, morality and honor and according to the spirit and letter of our law and Constitution.

We measure our success by our contribution to the protection and enhancement of American values, security and national interest.

We believe our people are the Agency's most important resource. We seek the best and work to make them better. We subordinate our desire for public recognition to the need for confidentiality. We strive for continuing professional improvement. We give unfailing loyalty to each other and to our common purpose.

We seek through our leaders to stimulate initiative, a commitment to excellence and a propensity for action; to protect and reward Agency personnel for their special responsibilities, contributions, and sacrifices; to promote a sense of mutual trust and shared responsibility.

We get our inspiration and commitment to excellence from the inscription in our foyer: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

² U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Factbook on Intelligence, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1991), 28.